



THE  
ECONOMY OF METHODISM

Illustrated and Defended:

IN A SERIES OF PAPERS.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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“HISTORY is philosophy teaching by example.” In all the affairs of life, it is found safer to derive rules of action from the common experience of men, than to be governed by speculative theories, built upon abstract principles, which may, for all we know, be false or inapplicable. It is true that these abstractions may be tested by experiment; but the experiment may cost too much. It may subvert and overturn those rules of action which had been found to direct us safely, notwithstanding the imperfection incident to all human systems; and it may leave us without the ability to return to them. For the undue indulgence of the imaginative faculty increases and invigorates it, until reason and judgment succumb to its sway; and the “balance of power” in the intellectual faculties is lost. In this state of the mind the imagination, always closely allied to the passions, riots in the full, unchecked sovereignty of its influence.

Let us apply these remarks to systems of government. History teaches, that when any people or nation release themselves from absolutism by revolution, if they attempt to build up a government on abstract notions of civil rights, without due attention to the lessons of human experience, they inevitably fall into anarchy. And it is as universally observed, that whatever be the evils which anarchy brings in its train, such a people are not led to retrace their steps, and to stop at the point of well-balanced government, established upon the broad ground of expediency, and adapted to the condition of man as he is—not as he should be. The imagination having the lead, suggests an infinity of abstractions and visionary theories, until, finally, the evils of successive experiments drive them to take refuge in absolute despotism.

The history of France, and the South American republics, furnish examples which illustrate the above remarks; while Holland and the United States, on the contrary, settled their governments



upon no such abstractions. Whatever of these may be found in our declaration of independence, when our fathers came to form a constitution and establish a government, they were governed by the lights of history and human experience ; and they devised a government full of checks and balances, which is now the great example of the world.

Thus it is that abstract speculations operate in the formation of civil governments ; but they are still more objectionable, because still more mischievous, in the institution of ecclesiastical government. In the former, the people may rightfully prescribe the number of officers they will have, with their several powers and prerogatives, and the manner of choosing them. The supreme power resides in the people. But in Church government, the supreme power is acknowledged to reside in one only Lord and Lawgiver, to whose authority all must submit implicitly ; and it is furthermore admitted, that He also selects and appoints officers who are to execute his commandments. The first commandment is, " To preach the gospel to every creature, baptizing them in—into—the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ; teaching them"—those who voluntarily submit to His government—" to do whatsoever I have commanded." Nothing more—nor nothing less. Nothing more ; for they may not teach " for doctrines the commandments of men." This was the great sin of the Jewish teachers, or rabbis. Nothing less ; for this would be taking away from his commandments.

The next commandment is, that these officers shall take the " oversight" of the Church, as those who must give an account of the members to God ; and it would seem to follow, that they must devise the " rules and regulations" which are necessary to the execution of the trust confided to them—the preaching of the gospel, and the oversight of those who are converted by their ministry. It is not allowed them by their Lord to *legislate* for the Church of Christ ; this is his own, exclusive prerogative. They may not " teach for doctrines the commandments of men," nor subject the believers to any other moral obligations than those which are found in the divine code ; but to execute the moral discipline enjoined by this code, requires " rules and regulations" adapted to the particular condition and circumstances of those over whom the Holy Ghost hath made them overseers or pastors. Should they exceed the limits of the authority prescribed by Him

who is Head over all things to the Church, and assume to be "lords over God's heritage," they would thereby withdraw their allegiance from Christ, and it would become the duty of every "member of his body"—all who acknowledge "Jesus Christ as Lord"—to renounce their pastoral oversight, and betake themselves to prayer to the Lord of the harvest, to send forth labourers into his vineyard.

Church government, then, cannot bear any just analogy to a commonwealth, or a republic—the essential element of which is, that the whole system of government is a conventional agreement, or compact, which may be modified from time to time by those who framed it, as circumstances may require; or be utterly changed by the governed,—for the Church of Christ is his kingdom; he holds the absolute sovereignty over it, having enacted, not a constitution under which legal statutes may be passed by subordinate human legislators, but a complete, perfect code of laws, which no man or council may repeal or alter, add to or subtract from, and obedience to which is promised by every subject of this kingdom. True, every one who enters the Church, must do so voluntarily. He must consent to the government; for our gracious Sovereign compels no one, nor does he authorize his officers to compel any to become subject to the laws by which his Church is governed, and all who attempt this, violate the laws of Christ. There is, therefore, no similarity, nor anything in common between civil government, originating in conventional compact, as all civil governments ought to do, and ecclesiastical government, which originated in the divine sovereignty; and the institutions of the one cannot be conformed to those of the other.

To sum up the whole matter, this world is a revolted province of God's universal empire, and its inhabitants are exposed to the most awful retributions individually, unless by some means they obtain pardon. These means have been provided by divine wisdom and compassion, and messengers have been appointed by God himself to proclaim a general amnesty—to offer not only pardon, but everlasting life, to every one who accepts the conditions, and submits to the rightful government of the "King of kings, and Lord of lords." And there is contained in this proclamation of mercy, all that is necessary as a rule of life, and the promise of all the aid we require to enable us to walk in the path of obedience; and among other provisions, the publishers of it are commanded to be

pastors over those who embrace the gracious offers of their Redeemer King, taking the oversight of the flock as those who must give account to the great Shepherd. Such pastors, divinely charged with such duties, cannot, in the language of the General Conference of 1828, "suffer their authority, in these respects, to be authoritatively controlled."

The following pages will expose a long-continued effort to "reform" the Methodist Episcopal Church upon principles diametrically opposite to those on which Church government can be rightfully based. With the "Reformers" the Church is a republic, and our ecclesiastical system they contended ought to be conformed to the free institutions of our country.

The opposition very soon became bitter and malignant. The episcopacy was represented as a fraud practised upon the Church, not only without Mr. Wesley's sanction, but contrary to his judgment and purpose, and maintained by fraud and forgery; and the itinerant ministers were not only *particeps criminis*, but usurpers, tyrants, &c.

All this was endured for more than seven years; and little was written in defence of the Church. Doctor Emory, however, published a "Defence of our Fathers," in reply to Alexander M'Caine's "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy;" and the work was so triumphant a vindication of the validity and authenticity of our episcopacy, and so clear and unanswerable a refutation of all the slanderous allegations of Mr. M'Caine against our "Fathers," that even his associates and compeers considered the publication of his pamphlet as the most unfortunate incident which happened to the reform movement during the war they maintained against the Methodist Episcopal Church.

The "Appeal to the Methodists," which commences the present volume, was published in 1827. Other editions followed, but they were soon sold, and the work, in the language of the press, has been for many years "out of print." It preceded the "Defence of our Fathers," but does not enter upon the defence of our episcopacy, because the writer of the Appeal knew that work was in better hands. It is chiefly confined to the inquiry as to the abstract right of the laity to a lay representation in the General and annual conferences, together with the "expediency" and "practicability" of the measure. The writer enjoyed peculiar advantages in the investigation of these questions; for

although the "Wesleyan Repository," a periodical devoted to the cause of reform, had been published in Philadelphia for several years, the seat of war had been transferred to Baltimore, and the Repository substituted by the "Mutual Rights," without the least regard to the interests or the feelings of the editor of the former paper, who had, it was said, sacrificed much in sustaining it at the outset, purely from devotion to the cause he advocated. All this was disregarded, however, by the "Sabeans," as the editor called them, in Baltimore, and his subscribers were served with the "Mutual Rights." This periodical was instituted by a convention of reformers, held immediately after the close of the General Conference of May, 1824, which was held in the City of Baltimore. Men of very distinguished ability took part in this convention. Dr. Jennings, the president, and Dr. Francis Waters, the secretary, were both scholars and popular local ministers; and there were others of no little renown. Most of these resided in Baltimore, and the author of the Appeal, also residing there, had frequent opportunities of discussing with several of them the various subjects connected with the reform movement. He was thus made acquainted beforehand with all the arguments which could be brought to sustain the changes proposed in our ecclesiastical polity, and had also the opportunity of having his own arguments in opposition to those changes passed through the scrutiny of reform logic, and of receiving again from this crucible the pure gold, separated from whatever baser metal they had been mixed in his hands. The arguments have, too, the advantage of having been applied to a case really existing, and meeting opposite arguments actually offered, and not supposititious, cases, and arguments which might be alleged not to be the true questions in debate.

The work will be found as applicable to the present as to former times. The author has the gratification to know that the pamphlet did much good at the time it was issued. Many who had been brought to favour reform by the specious arguments and vehement declamation of reformers, but who had not committed themselves to party array and compact, changed their opinions upon reading it, and remained firm in their attachment to the institutions of our fathers; and the members and ministers of the Church, generally, were confirmed in their adhesion to Methodism as it is, undisturbed by the visionary theories of

reform. And this was effected, too, without the adventitious ornament of rhetorical style. The writer expressly declared, he should have rejected such a dress had it offered; for "truth needs no ornament: all she borrows from the pencil is deformity." A plain summary of the arguments by which our Church economy is sustained was that which was wanted then, and it is supposed to be needed still. It is hoped, therefore, that our Book Agents will do the Church an acceptable service by offering it to all who desire to be informed on the subject.

The "Narrative and Defence," &c., which follows the "Appeal," was written for a committee who preferred complaints to the "preacher in charge" of Baltimore City Station, against members of the "Union Society of Baltimore," on account of certain slanderous publications in the "Mutual Rights,"—a periodical edited by a committee chosen annually by the society aforesaid, and acting in its behalf,—and for which publications the members of said society were held individually responsible, unless they condemned, and disclaimed all partnership in them by withdrawing from an association whose evil proceedings they could not control. The charges were sustained, and the offenders were expelled from Church fellowship. But pending the trials protests were published, and announced in the city papers, against the proceedings of the committee, and the preacher in charge. The Church authorities, it was alleged, were not competent to try "Reformers." There were two opposing parties in the Church, and neither could rightfully try the other. The prosecuting committee could not follow the example of the accused, and appeal to the public while the trials were pending. All they could do was to ask a suspension of public judgment, and to promise a plain "narrative and defence of the proceedings" after the trials should be concluded. This was done, and the work now presented is a reprint of the justification offered by the committee.

The brethren who preferred and sustained the charges were men of sound judgment, and generally esteemed both in and out of the Church for their piety and high Christian character and deportment, and their "Narrative and Defence" was accepted very generally by the Christian public, as a sufficient vindication of the Church proceedings in the cases to which it referred. We republish it, however, chiefly because it contains the best commentary extant on some very important rules of discipline, and

will be useful as a guide to all who may hereafter be placed in circumstances similar to those in which the brethren of the Church in Baltimore were placed by the reformers of 1827-8. The rule of discipline which forbids the "endeavouring to sow dissensions in any of our societies, by inveighing against either our doctrines or discipline," was one of the rules which the members of the Union Society were specifically charged with violating; and it will be found that the word "inveighing" is taken in the sense of "vehement railing and reproach"—not calm and dispassionate discussion, or temperate argument in favour of altering our rules. Another charge was, "Speaking evil of ministers," and the rule on this subject was defined to mean by "evil-speaking" unjust reproach, slander, calumny; so that the truth cannot come under the definition of the term, however severe the reproach may be. On the whole, we think the practical illustrations of our Discipline, which the "Narrative and Defence" affords, will justify the giving it a place in this volume.

But may it not be useful in a still more important respect? The work contains a concise history of transactions which will afford lessons of wisdom to all ecclesiastical reformers in time to come. "Reformers," says Mr. Wesley, "generally commence by condemning others; we"—his associates at Oxford—"begin by condemning ourselves." This was right and safe; and perhaps their subsequent success was in a great degree owing to this manner of beginning. Those who read the "Narrative and Defence," will see reformers in a different mood and temper; and the reader will marvel that Christians and Christian ministers could possibly indulge in such rancour and bitterness—such vindictive and uncharitable language—and even in downright slander and calumny. If he be a reformer, he will look at the extracts from the "Mutual Rights" as at a beacon admonishing him of the danger to which he is exposed, from the opposition he must encounter, of losing his temper and violating the law of Christian kindness and charity. He will find the strong have fallen. "Let him who assuredly standeth take heed lest he fall."

We have also inserted the "Report of the Committee on Petitions and Memorials," adopted unanimously by the General Conference of 1828, with annotations by the author of the Appeal. This was published in the "Itinerant," a periodical, in newspaper form, published in Baltimore and edited by the Rev. Melville B.

Cox, who afterward went to Liberia as a missionary and died there. It was issued twice a month for three years, and then discontinued, as no longer necessary to the defence of the Church. The work contains many valuable papers on the controversy then existing, and contributed by writers of great ability. Many of these papers deserve preservation, and we regret that we cannot add them to this volume without inconveniently augmenting its size and price. The Conference Report is an invaluable document, in which legislative power is explicitly disclaimed, and the Scriptural views of pastoral oversight are clearly stated. It was, however, vehemently assailed by the reform convention, and the Notes were written in its defence,—with what success the reader will judge.

Soon after the Conference of 1828, the reformers seceded from the Church and “set up for themselves.” At their convention in 1828, they passed “Articles of Association” for the reformed Churches; and, at the next convention, in 1830, they formed a constitution and form of government for “The Methodist Protestant Church.” A review of the “Articles of Association” and of the “Constitution” will be found in this volume, published originally in the “Itinerant.” It was the first opportunity afforded to ascertain the specific changes which our radical brethren intended to effect in the economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had we consented to be “reformed” after their fashion; and we proceeded to compare the new system of Church polity with that which they had renounced. The reader will see how much easier it is to innovate than to reform.

The other papers, taken likewise from the Itinerant, and included in this volume, all relate to the subject of controversy during the ruthless war waged upon our Church, or to incidents growing out of it, and will all be found illustrative of the grave questions of ecclesiastical polity brought under review.

Finally, we have added, in an Appendix, some remarks on the late reform movement in Philadelphia. This, we hope, we have done in a kind and Christian spirit. If we have not, we have not fulfilled our intention or duty, and shall very much regret it, as the brethren concerned have, by their prudent and inoffensive proceedings, eminently entitled themselves to the most courteous treatment from us, and the Christian regards of the whole Church.

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AN APPEAL TO THE METHODISTS,

IN OPPOSITION TO

THE CHANGES PROPOSED IN THEIR CHURCH  
GOVERNMENT.

Human experience which is always contradicting theory, is the only test of truth.—JOHNSON  
It should be repeated until it comes into the currency of a proverb, to innovate is not to  
reform.—BURKE.

Knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth.—PAUL.



## DEDICATION.

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TO REV. NICHOLAS SNETHEN.

REV. SIR,—Besides the common vanity of authors, which leads them to prefix to their works the names of celebrated men, I have other reasons for inscribing the following pages to you. You have condescended to notice my “book” while yet in embryo, and before its merits could possibly be appreciated. We have your gracious promise, that “if it should turn out to be in any measure what you suspect it will be, I must look out for something more than visionary theories.”

I was at first doubtful whether or not the remarks in the Mutual Rights, No. 32, over the signature of Spectator, were intended for me; for although I was designated by my professional appellation, and was conscious of having signified an intention of writing in defence of our Church polity, and, moreover, did not know of any other doctor who had done so, yet, as I was also described as a “learned and profound divine,” a conscious unworthiness withheld me from appropriating the remarks to myself. Spectator did not, however, leave us long to doubt; in a subsequent number, the doctor was pointed out as one of the signers of a publication which appeared in the “American and Commercial Daily Advertiser,” of a particular date,—and as there were no doctors who signed that publication except Doctor Roberts and myself, and as Doctor Roberts had never proposed to write on the subject alluded to, the application of your remarks to me was inevitable.

The compliment, then, of “learned and profound divine,” to one who had scarcely passed his novitiate in theology, must be understood as a *ruse de guerre*, intended to raise public expectation to a pitch which it

was hoped the author could not reach, and thereby lessen his chance of a patient and impartial reading; for it would be great vanity to suppose, that this misapplied compliment had originated in the many rumours with which you seem of late to have been so woefully beset.

And if we were not left to conjecture who was the object of your threats and denunciations, neither could there be any doubt as to the real name of the author of them. Spectator claims to himself the honour of being the father of the revolutionary project which so unhappily agitates our Church, for "when" he "began to write on the subject of reform he had but one colleague." 'Tis he, then, that sits on the whirlwind and directs the storm; and you, sir, have too long occupied that "bad eminence" to have remained unknown. And besides, Spectator, in the course of his desultory observations, mentions other circumstances of his own history that leave no doubt as to his real name.

You have been so good as to promise, that if my "book cannot be answered," you will yourself "announce my victory;" but the manifest perturbation of temper in which you write, and which I will do you the justice to say, is unlike your former self, and the prejudice you manifest against the author, leave him very little hope of a favourable decision, whatever may be the weight of his arguments; yet I cannot but be flattered by the intimation that you intend to enter the lists with me. It will greatly lessen the disgrace, and alleviate the mortification of defeat, to be vanquished by one so celebrated in controversy. Should I be slain by so renowned a warrior, my humble name will be immortalized, for it will float down the stream of time in company with the history of his achievements.

Occupying the high and commanding station of author and leader of this wonderful reformation, you will be mortified to learn that your credulity has been shamefully played upon and abused by "rumour with her thousand tongues," to whom you have been so fondly listening. To say nothing of the report respecting what you have "heard" that Bishop George said, and which I am authorized to affirm has been totally misrepresented, you have been entirely misled in all that you have written respecting myself: you had heard that I had written "a book," which at that time was not true; you had, nevertheless, understood it had been "considerably circulated in manuscript," and, what is worse, you had heard from "second and third hands much eulogy upon it!" Who could

have been the authors of this gratuitous eulogy upon a book they had not seen, and which was not yet written, it is impossible to imagine.

But this is not all,—under the influence of these teasing hearsays, you have represented me as a deserter from the cause of radicalism.

I have, you say, “been in your citadel,” and have “become acquainted with your camp;” and must prepare to pay up “an old score to the reformers.” Now, sir, let me ask you, When was I in “your citadel,” or in “your camp?” Was I ever a member of any “Union Society,”—an advocate for lay and local delegation—or an enemy to the Methodist Episcopal government? Never, sir; and as to possessing myself of your secrets in order to “spring a mine,” whatever I may have suspected, I never knew until now that you had any in your “camp.” You had always led us to believe that all your measures were openly avowed. I was not therefore apprized before, that you and your friends were engaged in a secret conspiracy against the Church. Heretofore the oldside brethren have had none of these “lights to aid them;” they ought to be much obliged to you for the information, as, although they may not be disposed to “spring a mine,” it will be their duty to counteract one designed against themselves.

Your charge of desertion, sir, is another of those stratagems of war which your skill in controversy enables you so dexterously to employ. You hope, by this odious charge, to anticipate any influence which my “book” might possibly have on the reformers; well knowing that personal prejudice against an author, is an impenetrable shield against his arguments.

But, sir, is it any crime for a man to change his opinions? Do you not use arguments from the pulpit; and what do you intend by them, if you do not design to change people’s opinions? A man may be ashamed of having held wrong opinions, but certainly not of having changed them. Was it then the mistaken notion you were under, that I was a truant to the doctrines of radicalism, that occasioned me to fall under the heavy weight of your displeasure? This would be strange, “passing strange,” because you yourself furnish me, in your own example, a justification, not only for change, but for entire revolution in opinion on this subject. You were once not only the advocate of our present form of Church government, but the chosen champion of Mr. Asbury and the Conference, against

Mr. O'Kelly and his "republican Methodism,"—and performed your task, too, with great zeal and success.

Mr. O'Kelly, it seems, complained of having "suffered much for the cause of truth and liberty." He claimed to be "the advocate of liberty and equality,"—and "an enemy of despotism and oppression,"—yet you told him, "By the help of grace, we will hold fast our union and integrity. If any man among us should attempt to attack either, we will note that man, and admonish him as a brother; if he still persist to cause *divisions* among us, either in doctrine or *discipline*, we will have no more fellowship with him." And again: "Mr. O'Kelly need not think to frighten us with scare-crows,—we are not to be terrified into *Ecclesiastical Republicanism*, by an imaginary dread of falling into Popery." "By the help of grace," sir, you and your brethren banished ecclesiastical republicanism from the Church, and we had ceased to hear of it these many years,—and now we have this same ecclesiastical republicanism "returning to us like a thief from transportation," under the "alias" of reform.

It was not then for having, as you supposed, changed my opinions, that I have incurred your displeasure and am threatened with chastisement,—nor could it be for intending to write a "book" in defence of our Church government, for reformers have all along complained of our *not* writing. Perhaps the real cause of your wrath may be found in a remark which I have already quoted: "When you first began to write on the subject of reform, you had but one colleague." You are the father of this great project,—and perhaps men are as much attached to their intellectual as their corporeal progeny. We know, moreover, that the fondness of a parent is not diminished, but is rather increased, by the deformity of his offspring. In proportion as the defects of organization threaten its life, will the tenderness and solicitude of the parent be awakened; even utter hopelessness will not remove or appease his anxiety. Thus it may be with you,—you cannot bear to have the deformity of your bantling pointed out to you,—and it would be cruel to ridicule the fondness, and sport with the feelings of a fond father, did he not absurdly insist that all should look upon the rickety urchin with the same partiality as he does himself.

But whatever occasioned your severe animadversions, the consequences are to be dreadful indeed! The cry of the commander has given to the whole army an object of pursuit and vengeance. Already one of your subalterns has echoed the war whoop, and "On, brethren, on!" will re-

sound from the centre to the circumference. Itinerant, local and lay reformers, all "united against one poor" doctor, "are fearful odds." The subaltern alluded to has already distinguished me as the "chief officer of the star-chamber, to my Lord of Canterbury." Notwithstanding I have the misfortune to be out of favour with you, I will do you the service to rebuke the indiscreet ardour of this recruit, lest he should do you more harm than good by his temerity. Let him know, then, that his fictitious signature has not concealed him as well as he intended; we have had a peep under his mask, and would advise him to be careful in future not to expose his ignorance in print. The star-chamber was a civil not an ecclesiastical tribunal, for it was composed of the judges of the realm, and the king's privy council; whatever part, then, "My Lord of Canterbury" took in the proceedings of the court, he acted in the capacity of a civil, not an ecclesiastical officer. He was there by the appointment of the king, as a member of his privy council, not in his quality of archbishop. Let him keep his LEARNING for the pulpit—a rhetorical flourish *ad captandum vulgus* may pass, as well as crude *geological* arguments, when mixed up with the desultory matter of a VERY LONG sermon; but it may not be so safe to place either before the public through the medium of the press.

In sober seriousness, my dear sir, I was not aware of having done or said anything to alarm your "pride" or to excite your "prejudice" until Spectator informed me that I "had not been sparing in means to rouse and aggravate both." In truth I had always loved and esteemed you; and when I saw you climbing the steep and slippery ascent to revolutionary distinction, my affection remained unabated, though I was compelled by a sense of duty to take an opposite course. I still wait with painful anxiety, to see the result of the desperate game you are playing. You never can reform the Church after your fashion: but you may rend it; and have cause after all to lament your fatal success. Among those who in the dismemberment of the Church will follow in your train, there may, and probably will be, many good men "wrong in their opinions, but right in their sentiments:" but there will also follow, those turbulent, discontented spirits, who are impatient of all control; and all those who are against our Discipline, because our Discipline is *against them*. With such discordant materials to arrange—such a heterogeneous mass to organize—you will have work enough upon your hands; and perhaps some



future adversary may address you in the language which, on a similar occasion, you addressed to Mr. O'Kelly :—

*“ Where are the societies which Mr. O'Kelly and his brethren have formed, of those who have been converted by their instrumentality, since they have been separated from the Episcopal Methodists? Where are the seals to their ministry, the living epistles written upon the fleshly tables of the heart, known and read of all men? Perhaps the inquiry is premature. It is a work of time to organize a society. The Republican Methodists have not had much leisure to call sinners to repentance. For these seven years most of their attention has been taken up in exposing the evils of episcopacy, correcting its abuses, and opening the eyes of the poor deluded people who are sinking under the billows of despotism! When they have fully exposed the ambition, the chicanery, and the lucrative views of bishops; when they have turned the people's ears away from hearing their delusions; when they shall have written a few more ‘apologies,’ ‘appeals’ and ‘epistles to the elect lady and her children,’ lo! then they will turn to the Gentiles. Then, indeed, we may expect to see the happy result of a system so purely evangelical.”*

You will then perhaps regret, that you had not profited by the remark so often heard from your old friend Mr. Asbury: “Local men have local views.”

You have, however, done me one essential service by your remarks: you have taught me to count the cost of this undertaking—the friendships it will dissolve and the animosities it will awaken. I am free to confess that the fearful aggregate is appalling. To a Christian it must be a painful sacrifice of feeling, and to a professional man a sacrifice of interest. For I am aware that in controversies the friendships which grow out of similarity of views and unity of effort, subside with the occasion which gave rise to them; while the enmities remain after the cause of the contest shall have long passed away. Nothing but a firm conviction of duty could have induced me to write; and he who hesitates between duty and inclination is undone.

I am, sir, with wounded feelings, but unabated affection,

Your brother in Christ,

THE AUTHOR.

## A N A P P E A L .

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THE Wesleyan Methodists have long attracted the attention of all classes both in Europe and in America. Their origin was confessedly at a time of great moral and religious darkness, in which the Scriptural doctrines of justification by faith only, and the sensible witness of it in the soul of the believer, were heard as strange things, and those who preached them were denounced as fanatics and enthusiasts. Yet, within less than a century, a few evangelical missionaries have caused these gospel truths to be known and almost universally acknowledged, in every country they have visited, and by every people to whom they have had access. We do not mean that all have received them, so as to become the subjects of their saving influence; but the truths which at first were everywhere opposed, have now obtained the general assent of those to whom they have been preached.

A few good men, of plain sense, and (with two or three exceptions) without extraordinary talents or learning, have effected this moral change, in a large portion of Christendom. Having set out with the single object of "spreading Scripture holiness over the land," they kept their purpose steadily in view, and without the aid of wealth, or the patronage of power, have succeeded to an extent which is the wonder and astonishment of the world.

Let it be remembered that no original purpose of establishing a separate sect or denomination of people, entered into the design of Mr. Wesley and his coadjutors. They only desired to waken up the different Protestant denominations, and particularly the Church of England, to a just apprehension of the renovating influence of gospel truth, and of the importance of Christian discipline. The circumstances which subsequently led to the formation of separate societies were altogether unforeseen; and the gradual organization of that system of Church polity which now distinguishes the Methodists, seems to be as much the work of a superintending Providence as any other part of their history.

It will not be denied that there had always been in the Church of England, and in the dissenting denominations, both before and at the time

when Mr. Wesley instituted his system of missionary ministration, many pious and evangelical clergymen; but their light was hidden as under a bushel. Confined to a narrow sphere of operation, their usefulness was necessarily limited to the congregations to whom they ministered. It was the itinerant system that enabled Mr. Wesley and the preachers in connexion with him, to dispense the word of life in every place and to all classes of the people—to preach the gospel to the poor—to follow those who did not come to church, into the hedges and highways, and to turn the outcasts of mankind from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God!

The good that has been done by the Methodists would be very inadequately estimated, if it were measured by the numbers they have gathered into their own societies, numerous as they are. For although they have been led by circumstances to establish a separate and independent community, they have nevertheless been made greatly instrumental in effecting their original purpose; that of awakening the slumbering zeal, and stirring up the diligence of the other Christian denominations. The success with which their missionary plan of operation has been attended, has excited the attention and directed the efforts of other churches to this primitive method of propagating the gospel; and though many other circumstances have contributed to urge on the mighty effort which is now making by the different Protestant denominations, both in Europe and America, to send the gospel to every land, and people, and tongue under heaven, nothing has had so much agency in originating and forwarding this glorious design, as the itinerant missionary plan of the Methodists.

In our own country especially, the ecclesiastical economy of the Methodists has been, and still is, peculiarly adapted to the circumstances of the people. A sparse population, scattered over an immense territory, could not be congregated so as to support a settled ministry. The peculiar organization of our itinerating system obviated this difficulty, and the gospel has been carried to the very houses of the people. A number of small congregations collected in different and remote settlements, have supplied, by their separate contributions, a pecuniary support to the ministry, which no single congregation could have furnished. As the population became dense, and their benevolence was awakened and directed by the influence of religion, they were enabled to send the gospel to the new settlements, which were continually forming in the interior of the country. The emigrants had no sooner reached the wilderness than the ministers of the gospel appeared amongst them, and they were saved, in a good degree, from the ignorance and the barbarism which inevitably follow the privation of religious instruction. A circumstance that was related to me by my brother, the late Rev. John Wesley Bond, who accompanied Bishop Asbury, for several years, in his annual travels through the United States,

will serve as a fine illustration of the above remarks. The aged and venerable bishop was preaching to a congregation assembled in the woods, on the borders of one of the western States. It was during the late war, and immediately after the battle on our northern frontier, in which the militia in the service of the United States had refused to cross the lines, to the assistance of the regular troops, then engaged in an unequal contest with the enemy.

The preacher having urged home upon his auditory the truths of the gospel, in his own pointed manner, appealed to their own recollections, for the circumstances which proved the disinterestedness with which the Methodist preachers had always come amongst them. "We followed you to the wilderness," said he, "when the earth was our only resting place, and the sky our canopy; when your own subsistence depended on the precarious success of the chase, and consequently you had little to bestow on us. We sought not *yours* but *you*. And now show us the people who have no preacher, and whose language we understand, and we will send them one; yes, we will *send* them one: for the Methodist preachers are not militia, who will not cross the lines; they are regulars, and they must go."\*

This remark is the best explanation which can be given of that system which has enabled the Methodist preachers to surmount the many physical and moral obstacles which everywhere seemed to block up their way. It consists in an evangelical itinerant ministry, under the direction of a general superintendent, clothed with the authority of distributing the labour as circumstances may require; while at the same time these itinerating preachers, that they may also afford the benefits of a *pastoral* ministry to their converts, are empowered in their collective capacity, to make such prudential regulations as may be necessary for the enforcement of Christian discipline, both amongst themselves and the people of their charge.

The rapid growth of the Methodist Episcopal Church, under its present economy, is certainly without parallel in modern times. There are now living in this city three members of the first society formed by the Methodists in Baltimore, which consisted of only fourteen members. The society *now* contains more than five thousand members. They have nine houses of public worship, and probably one-third of the population of the city (who attend public worship anywhere) attend Methodist preaching. The Rev. Wm. Watters, lately deceased, was the first American Methodist preacher who had a seat in conference. He took his seat in that body in the year 1773, when the conference consisted of but ten preachers in all. There are now more than one thousand four hundred travelling preachers in the American connexion, and from four to five thousand local preach-

\* The good bishop unintentionally touched a patriotic feeling by his allusion to the recreant militia, and the whole multitude took off their hats and gave him three cheers. The bishop was alarmed. "John, I went too far," said he; "I went too far, John."

ers ; while the members exceed 300,000, and are rapidly increasing in numbers. When it is considered that we retain none in fellowship who are known to live in the practice of vice of any kind, or who indulge in any of those fashionable amusements which have a tendency to alienate the heart from spiritual things, it will be admitted that there must exist something peculiarly efficient in a plan of operation which has succeeded to such an astonishing degree, in despite of human prejudice and passion, in establishing a moral government which exercises a positive and unrelenting control over all the natural propensities of the human heart.

It would be as illiberal as unjust to allege, that this success was wholly owing to any peculiar doctrines enforced by the Methodist ministry. Our doctrines are avowedly those of the Protestant Episcopal Church ; and all our tenets which we hold to be essential, are held in common by most other Protestant denominations. This great and wonderful success, must then have been owing to the MISSIONARY character of our ministry,—a body of evangelical preachers, itinerating over the continent under the direction of a general superintendent, with power to distribute the labour as circumstances may require. To submit to such absolute direction, required on the part of the preachers great sacrifices of feeling, and incalculable privations of personal comfort. Nothing could induce any man to submit, and patiently persevere in such submission, but a firm conviction of the necessity of the measure ; for he not only consents to give up his right of selecting the place of his labours, but to be sent to a people who make no stipulations with him for his support. He is neither to ask nor expect any guarantee for even food and clothing. He must rely implicitly on Providence and the bounty of his brethren, for his maintenance. The people on their part, in order to support this itinerant plan of ministerial labour, have consented to surrender the right of choosing their pastor, and permit these missionaries to make the regulations by which the whole Church, preachers and people, are to be governed in spiritual things—which, after all, amounts to no more than authority to enforce the moral discipline of the Bible. The whole system, in fact, is a system of sacrifices, made for the purpose of promoting the great interests of the Redeemer's kingdom,—not with the selfish view of securing advantages to ourselves, but to enable us to send the gospel to those who are either too poor to pay for it, or too ignorant to know the value of it, and therefore do not desire it. It is this great object, which has led us to make the sacrifices which have characterized our history, and carried the renovating, redeeming influences of the gospel into the dark places of the earth, the abodes of ignorance and vice, for more than a century past ; and he who is now unwilling to make them, may notwithstanding be a very good man—nay, a good Christian—but he is unfit for a Methodist, and the sooner he renounces the profession the better for the Church.

It is this system of Church government—so simple in its structure, and efficient in its operation ; so tested by experience, and justified by success ; and, withal, so sanctified in the feelings and affections of our people, by the endearing associations with which it stands connected—that we are now called upon, not to modify, but radically to change ; not to mend in some of its less important details, but to alter in its fundamental principles, and to substitute for it a speculative scheme of government, inapplicable to our circumstances, and therefore impossible to be effected,—a scheme founded on abstract notions of natural rights, but which none of its advocates have attempted to exhibit in any visible or tangible shape or form, and, therefore, they have carefully avoided the discussion of the parts most important in any system—namely, its practicability and expediency. Happy for us the scheme is not new. In Europe it has had its day of noise and strife, and has ceased to agitate the Church ; and in this country, Mr. O'Kelly started it more than thirty years ago, left the Church, and drew off several of the preachers with him. He lived to see the ruins of the visionary fabric he had laboured to erect, and to mourn over the desolation which he had brought upon that part of the vineyard where, as a Methodist preacher, he so faithfully and usefully laboured, but which he had afterward turned out to be ravaged and destroyed by “republican Methodism.” The formidable phalanx now arrayed against us, may, it is feared, do us much harm ; but we will take protection under that strong Arm which has heretofore defended us. Hitherto our history has shown that the great Head of the Church had appointed us for a special work in his vineyard, and that he superintended and directed the labour ; opening the way before our ministry ; qualifying and sustaining them in their arduous labours, under circumstances which would have discouraged any but such as were assured of the Divine support, and who were prepared to believe in hope against hope. Great conflicts await us, but out of all the Lord will deliver us : while he is with us, the more we are oppressed, the more we shall multiply and grow. Let us be faithful to our calling—let us watch unto prayer. The present revolutionary scheme of our disaffected members will share the fate of all the similar projects which have preceded it. Our children will read of it in history ; but ere they take our places in the Church, the troubled waters shall have heard the voice of Him who says to the winds and the waves, “Be still,” and they obey his voice.

The changes contended for by the reformers, are certainly such as, if effected, must alter all the fundamental principles of our ecclesiastical polity—and the present contest will mark the most interesting period in the history of Methodism. Our separation from the Church of England was a change of much less importance, as the connexion was at any time more nominal than real. That Church never was permitted to exercise any control or jurisdiction over the Methodist societies, either in England

or America ; and in fact the change was only perceived by our people, in the administration of the ordinances by those who had not derived their authority from that Church. The original principles of our institution remained unimpaired by the separation ; the missionary system of ministerial operation still directed the conferences ; and the superintendent of the Methodist Society acquired no new powers under the new denomination of bishop of the Methodist Episcopal Church, except the right of ordaining ! But the changes now contended for, go to alter the whole system,—to subvert the original principles of the compact between the ministry and the membership ; to reclaim rights, which had been heretofore surrendered on both sides for the common good,—and to substitute a plan not yet defined, and perhaps undefinable, based on abstract metaphysical rights, which are supposed to be inherent in the members of the Church.

Before we consent to the adoption of these revolutionary projects, it will certainly be our duty carefully to examine them ; to ascertain if there be nothing visionary in their nature—nothing inapplicable in their provisions, or destructive in their tendencies.

To enumerate and comment upon all the changes which have been proposed in our government and discipline, would swell this volume to an undue size, and might impose too heavy a tax upon the time, both of my readers and myself. It is, moreover, unnecessary, because our reformers have agreed to merge, for the present, all other questions of change in the one great effort to effect such an alteration in the government as may provide for an immediate representation of the local preachers and laity in the General Conference ; justly calculating that when this alteration is obtained, they may easily introduce whatever other changes they may have in contemplation. Upon the propriety and utility of this fundamental change, then, must this controversy turn ; and we propose to examine, in the first place, the claim of RIGHT which has been urged in favour of this measure, and then the *expediency* and *practicability* of the measure itself. And first, of the right of representation, set up by the reformers.

It will be unreservedly conceded that, if the right to demand this privilege can be clearly established, it necessarily puts an end to all controversy ; for no religious man or body of men can, with a good conscience, withhold what it is the right of another to possess. If, then, our reformers have shown, either from Scripture authority or from the natural rights of man, a right to send delegates to the General Conference, or otherwise to participate immediately in the legislative power of the Church, it must be accorded to them without limitation or reserve, whenever a majority shall demand it. We will, therefore, endeavour candidly and fairly to examine these pretensions ; and we hope for a patient and impartial hearing.

The grounds on which these claims of right are rested, have not been

so distinctly stated by their advocates as we could have wished—they have been rather assumed as incontrovertible, than supported by argument : but when arguments have been employed, they have been drawn from two sources :—First, the Holy Scriptures ; and, secondly, the political rights recognised by the civil institutions of our country. To the first, namely, the Holy Scriptures—the great charter of the Christian Church—the appeal would be final if they supported the claim. But we have not been able to find in these sacred records, anything which goes to sanction the pretensions set up by our reformers ; on the contrary, we believe the Scriptures no where prescribe any form of government for the Christian Church. This, however, is only our opinion—formed, indeed, after a patient examination of those passages of Scripture which have been most confidently appealed to by the advocates of the different Church governments which have been established in the Christian world, but still an opinion which may be erroneous ; and if our opponents can make out a form of government, prescribed in the New Testament, as essential to the constitution of the Church of Christ, we promise, for ourselves, an implicit submission to its mandates—we will neither cavil nor reason about it ; but yield to such authority, an entire and unqualified obedience.

In the meantime, however, we may state some of the reasons for the opinion we have given, that the Scriptures have prescribed to the Church no particular form of government for the regulation of her outward economy ; for we do not include in the idea of government the moral discipline of the Church, any more than her religious tenets.

After an attentive perusal of the controversy which has been so long maintained by the different denominations of Christians, each endeavouring to show the Scriptural authority for their different forms of government, we have not found any one of those advocates who satisfactorily supports the superior claims of his Church ; and the controversy is still maintained by the different sects, each appealing to Scripture, and each supporting their appeals by arguments so specious and plausible as to leave the impartial inquirer in the utmost doubt and perplexity. Now we cannot believe that anything which is essential to the economy of the Church of Christ, has been so vaguely defined, as to elude the honest and patient inquiry of even a man of plain common sense, much less of men of such learning, piety, and ability, as have engaged in this controversy.

Under the Mosaic dispensation, the Levitical economy was made essential to the constitution of the Church. It could not be altered, or superseded by any human authority ; and hence it was described and enjoined with a particularity and exactness, which was not, and could not, be misunderstood. The different orders of the priesthood, the family from which they were to be taken, their authority and their several duties, their dress, the time and the manner of making the offerings and performing the sacri-



fices, in short, all that belonged to it, was prescribed with a precision of language, and a circumstantiality of detail, which left no room for mistake or misapprehension. If this is not the case under the Christian dispensation, it must be because there does not exist the same necessity for it. The Jewish Church was instituted with a different design, and therefore required a different organization. Its institutions were especially designed for a particular family, and accordingly the rites and ceremonies of the Church could only be performed at an appointed place. Such an economy could only be preserved amongst an insulated people, where the whole nation was under a Theocracy. Christianity, on the contrary, was originally designed to diffuse itself over the whole world,—to establish itself in all countries, however different their forms of civil government might be found, and without pretending to interfere with any of the existing political establishments: with this design, any particular form of Church government was wholly incompatible; and therefore none was imposed—at least none was made essential to the existence of the Christian Church. It is obvious that had any external organization been made essential, there have been times of persecution when in some of those countries where the gospel has been planted there could have been no visible Church at all. Wherever there were two or three believers in Christ, they constituted a Church, though they might be all members of the same household, and though there was no *minister* (in the common acceptance of the word) amongst them; for Christ himself, according to his promise, was in the midst of them. As these families of believers coalesced into communities the Church was enlarged, and they were left to adopt such prudential regulations, from time to time, as occasion might require; and we believe this to be the simple origin of all that has been known in the world under the denomination of Church government.

We further infer the liberty of any body of Christians to adopt that form of government which they deem most expedient, from the fact that God has, at different times, manifested his approbation of the efforts of the different sects and denominations, by especial effusions of the Holy Spirit: under their ministrations, sinners have been awakened and converted; believers quickened and built up in their most holy faith; and at this time the mighty missionary efforts which are making in the heathen world, are owned and blessed by the great Head of the Church, whatever be the distinguishing appellation of the missionary, or the sect under whose Church government he may have arranged himself. We think, therefore, that whatever infinite Wisdom owns and blesses cannot be wrong; or, at least, not essentially wrong: or, in other words, if the Author of our religion had appointed or ordained any particular form of government, perpetually obligatory on the Christian Church, he would not sanction a departure from his own institutions, by manifesting his presence and power

amongst those who have seceded from them; neither would he have left those institutions to the uncertain conjectures of fallible men, or to the vague inferences which can be drawn from a few incidental remarks in the Holy Scriptures.

If, however, this reasoning appear to our opponents to be inconclusive, we fairly leave them the task of pointing out the exclusive Scripture plan of Church government; and if they will not insist upon changing our economy until they have performed this task, we will be satisfied—ere that time the millennium will have commenced, and we shall have no further occasion for doubtful disputations.

We proceed, in the next place, to consider the argument drawn from the NATURAL inherent rights of mankind—namely, that of being entitled, either in person or by their representatives, to have a voice in the legislature by whose acts they are governed. On this argument the changes have been rung with incessant reiteration. We have been reminded that it is the birthright of every American; and to withhold it, is the utmost stretch of despotism and tyranny. And our reformers have fondly compared their efforts to obtain this privilege in the Church to our national struggle for independence! Now, after such long and loud complaints, one would naturally suppose that those who made them had really been deprived of some rights which had appertained to them, either as men or as Christians; that when they complain of tyranny and despotism, they are labouring under some grievous oppression, from which they had been heretofore endeavouring ineffectually to free themselves, but under which they were still held by the unrelenting hand of arbitrary power—of usurped and tyrannical authority: and yet nothing of all this has happened. The complainants are under no government but such as they have voluntarily put themselves under, and which they can, at any time, renounce. They have been deprived of no rights or privileges, either as men or as Christians, but such as they voluntarily surrendered for the common interest of the community of which they became members, and which they can reclaim when they please; yet this is all the tyranny of which they have to complain. On this ground alone they have compared their brethren who differ with them to the “officers of the British crown,” who could not see the justice of the claims made by the Americans. It is certain, however, that we never should have complained of these officers of the crown, or of the king either, had they been willing to allow us the rights which we freely accord to our reformers—namely, the right to renounce their allegiance, and of setting up for themselves.

Let us, however, examine this pretension, so confidently relied upon by our reformers, more analytically; and we beg leave once for all to say, that we do as cordially and as fully approve the principles of liberty and equality of rights acknowledged by the Constitution of these United States,

as do our brethren, the reformers. We believe that the people have a natural inherent right to make a constitution and form of government, and to alter or amend it, or substitute another at their sovereign will and pleasure. But we assert that these rights grow out of our civil relations, and do not necessarily belong to us as members of any institution into which we have voluntarily entered, for the plain reason that we do not bear the same relation to the one as to the other.

To make the particular application of this general remark, we contend that no argument drawn from the supposed analogy between our membership in the Methodist Episcopal Church and our own citizenship as members of the civil community can be valid, because no such analogy exists, or *can* exist.

The argument stands thus:—Reformers say it is the right and privilege of every citizen of the United States to be represented in the legislature of his country; and, *therefore*, it is the right, and ought to be the privilege, of every member of the Methodist Episcopal Church to be represented in the General Conference, or legislative department of the Church. We answer, that the “therefore” in the above argument is a *non sequitur*. The conclusion does not follow from the premises—the two governments are totally dissimilar in their *origin*, in their *authority*, and in the *design* of their institution.

And, first, they differ in their origin. The government of the United States originated with the people. The people, therefore, were necessarily antecedent to their rulers, and to the Constitution under which they act, and hence are the only legitimate source of all power and authority in the government. The power that created can, of right, destroy or alter the Constitution when they deem it proper.

The government of the Methodist Episcopal Church originated with the ministry, and the lay members voluntarily entered into the association, under the regulations made by Mr. Wesley and his successors,—the right to make new regulations, or to alter the old ones, being reserved to the preachers in the very terms of the compact. The preachers, therefore, existed in fact before the people or lay members of the Church. The government was *originally*, and of *necessity*, in their hands, and we were by them invited to the privileges provided for us in the economy they had instituted. They cannot, therefore, be charged with the assumption of a power which does not legitimately belong to them; for it is no other power than has been virtually conceded to them by every one who has entered into the connexion, and become a party to the original compact. Here, then, is a manifest dissimilarity in the relation which the members of our Church bear to their government, and that which subsists between the citizens of the United States and the government they have instituted. Let it be remembered, that we are not now arguing the propriety or the

impropriety of changing our Church polity—that is a question we propose to discuss presently—we are only showing that the claim of right, growing out of analogy, cannot be sustained : we, therefore, proceed to the next point of dissimilarity in the relations we sustain as citizens of the United States and as members of the Church ; namely, the authority claimed and exercised by the civil and ecclesiastical governments to which we belong.

The authority of the civil government is coeval with our birth. It claims our allegiance from the very circumstance of our being born within the pale of its jurisdiction ; and long before we are admitted to the right of suffrage, or a participation in any legislative enactment, our property, our liberty, and our life itself, depend for their preservation on the authority of the government : our obedience to the laws of the country does not depend on our individual consent to them, either before or after we arrive at age ; we may consider them grievous and oppressive, but we have no alternative but to obey. In short, we are born under the jurisdiction of the government, and the allegiance which is claimed of us is independent of our choice. We can in no way withdraw from this allegiance but by abandoning our country ; and circumstances may place even this option out of our power. There arises, therefore, from the nature of our civil obligations, a right to participate, in person or by proxy, in the enactment of the laws by which we are to be governed, as soon as we are deemed capable of exercising this right with advantage to ourselves and the community. But change the nature of these obligations—make membership in the community and obedience to the laws a matter of choice—and the rights which belong to the former relation no longer remain. The rights and the obligations are necessarily reciprocal. Where obedience is necessary and compulsory, the corresponding rights are natural and inherent ; but where the obedience is voluntary, the privileges are conditional, and are, in extent, no more than are stipulated for in the contract between those who govern and those who are governed. Now this is precisely the relation we sustain to the Methodist Episcopal Church. We were not born members of it ; owed no natural allegiance to its government ; it did not extend its jurisdiction over us in our infancy, nor until we voluntarily entered within its pale. There was no necessity, either physical or moral, for our becoming members of this Church instead of any other. Our becoming members was a voluntary act, done with a previous knowledge of all the rights we were required to surrender, and the privileges we acquired by the contract. We could not carry with us into this voluntary association any natural rights incompatible with the contract we then entered into ; and if the right to participate in the legislative power was no part of the conditions we stipulated for, can we now complain, that we are deprived of this right, or that it is improperly withheld from us ? Surely not. If to this we add that there remains to us the right of throw-

ing off our allegiance to the government, of dissolving the obligations we have voluntarily taken upon ourselves, what becomes of the analogy which has been so strangely instituted and insisted upon between our civil and ecclesiastical relations ? or what of the charge of usurpation and tyranny, which has been so repeatedly made against the ministry of our Church ?

The rights which a Methodist, whether local preacher or layman, possesses, as such, are purely conventional. They are not natural, but acquired rights ; and they are known and determined by the articles of association, contained in our book of government and Discipline. The Church is a voluntary association, entered into for religious purposes ; whoever enters into its communion is entitled to all the privileges and immunities which the articles of association hold out to him, and to no more. If he finds, upon experiment, that the religious advantages he acquires, do not compensate him for the sacrifices he is required to make, he has an indefeasible right to withdraw from the community, and thereby release himself from the obligations imposed by his membership ; but he has no right to demand of the Church to change her economy for his accommodation.

To all this it is objected that many of the members entered the Church at so early a period of life, as not to be competent to decide on the propriety or impropriety of the system of government under which they placed themselves. Now this is readily admitted ; nay, we will go farther, and admit that many who enter the Church at mature age do so under circumstances of religious excitement, which do not admit of a calm and deliberate examination of our principles of government.

The Church, nevertheless, has done all that is incumbent upon her to do in the matter. Her book of Discipline and government has been published, and is everywhere to be found ; and if those who enter her community do not make themselves acquainted with it, certainly she cannot be charged with the neglect : all that can be expected of her is, that when the minor arrives at proper age, and the feelings of those more advanced in life shall sober down, so that both shall have an opportunity to reconsider what they have done, if they repent of their engagements, she shall permit them to dissolve the contract, and seek elsewhere a connexion more in accordance with their views and feelings. Surely it cannot be contended that their neglect, or their involuntary ignorance, entitles them to claim a right to alter the original terms of the compact—or, in other words, to change the Church government to suit their convenience. But is it not a fact after all, that those who enter our Church, both young and old, obtain all the advantages which they contemplate by the connexion ? Whether they enter as penitents or professors, it is the religious privileges of the Church which they desire to enjoy—Christian fellowship and communion, our class-meetings, our prayer-meetings, and our love-feasts—

the means of being good, and of doing good, are all the inducements which lead them to form the connexion. The dignity of being legislators and governors are amongst the after thoughts, which do not arise until they become, in their own estimation at least, of more consequence, and entitled to such distinction in the Church.

But, again, it is contended by reformers, that a member of the Church, who has contributed to the support of the ministry, and to the erection of houses of worship, has thereby created a pecuniary interest in the community, and this pecuniary interest entitles him to claim a representation in the Church, or at least to indemnification, if he finds himself compelled to dissolve his connexion with it. To this we answer, that with regard to his contributions for the support of the ministry, he has had the benefit of their ministration while he contributed to their maintenance; if he has not had the equivalent—if he has not been amply compensated—it must have been his own fault. And with regard to his contributions for the building of churches, they were not exacted by the conditions of his membership. They were voluntary donations, by which he did not acquire any property in those churches—they were given to erect FREE houses of worship, to which all have a right to come and hear the gospel. If the Methodist preachers have any peculiar privileges, with regard to the right of occupying the pulpits in these houses, this also was a part of the intention of the donors. The intention being in all respects fulfilled, no just ground of complaint can remain to those who choose to change their relation to the Church. Let it be remembered that our churches have been built by those who are now dead, as well as those who are living—by those who are not members of the Church, as well as those who are; the intention of all was the same, and this intention has been fulfilled whenever a Methodist Episcopal meeting-house has been erected—if it continues such, and under the regulations which existed at the time of its erection; but if it cease to be a METHODIST EPISCOPAL MEETING-HOUSE, or if the seats cease to be free, then we shall not have fulfilled the intention of the donors, and shall have violated the obligation which we entered into with them. The claim of individual pecuniary interest, then, will not bear out our brethren in their fancied rights, as whatever has been acquired by them, (if anything has been acquired,) belongs equally to thousands who never were members of the Church at all: and consequently, if our reformers have acquired by their contributions a right of representation, the same right has been acquired by all who have so contributed; and many of these will be found, not only not members of our Church, but members of other religious communions.

We come now to the consideration of the third particular, in which we said *our* Church government differs necessarily from every civil government; namely, in the design of its institution. Civil government is insti-

tuted to promote or secure the peace and welfare of the community which is included within the mutual compact. Their own interest is the only object to be provided for, and therefore no more natural rights are surrendered, no more individual interests are sacrificed, than are necessary to secure the great object of the association. Such a community is not expected to provide for the welfare of any who are without the pale of its jurisdiction; for those who contribute nothing to the common stock, cannot be entitled to receive from the contributions of others.

Now, the object and design of our religious association is essentially different from this. It is true, we propose by our connexion to increase the religious advantages of our members; but then we have another object in view—our system is essentially a missionary one, it is intended for the good of those who belong not to the community—to send the gospel, as we have said, to those who are too poor to pay for it, or too ignorant to appreciate its value, and therefore do not desire it. Is it, then, strange that such an association, formed for purposes so widely different from those which influence us in the organization of civil compacts, should also differ from civil government as much in its structure and provisions as it does in its design? Will not such a religious community be necessarily called upon to make sacrifices of individual rights and advantages which it is not at all necessary to make as members of civil society? To combine the twofold advantages of providing pastors for the Church and missionaries for the world, our ministry sustain this double relation, and fulfil the duties incumbent upon both: the regulations required by such an arrangement, being such as chiefly relate to the distribution of ministerial labour, the right of making such regulations has been left to the ministry themselves; and the people, or laity, have moreover relinquished the right of electing their own pastors, because the exercise of this right was incompatible with the plan of an itinerating missionary ministry.

It will be admitted that the laity have thus given up important privileges; but it remains to be proved that they have not been compensated for the rights they have surrendered,—whether, without taking into the account the good done to others by our plan of periodically changing ministers, the members themselves are not greatly benefited by it. But when we consider the missionary design as forming the groundwork of our government, there can be no doubt of the necessity we are under of relinquishing these rights.

But if this original missionary design called for important sacrifices on the part of the laity, did it not demand a still more important surrender of natural rights on the part of our itinerant ministers? They not only relinquish the right of selecting their own field of labour, but submit to the absolute disposal of a general superintendent, whom they have clothed with authority to send them to any part of the United States and even into

Canada ; and that, too, without any guarantee from those to whom they are sent, that they shall be supplied with even the necessities of life. They agree to go, depending entirely for the support of themselves and their families on the voluntary contributions of those amongst whom they are sent to labour.

We can conceive of no sacrifices of individual rights, comforts, and conveniences, superior in amount or importance to those which our travelling preachers are thus called upon to make, in order to fulfil the primitive missionary design of our institutions. When we consider the unhealthiness of some of the circuits, the poverty of others, and the labour which is required on all of them, we will be led to wonder at the zeal and the disinterestedness which has influenced so many to forego the comforts of domestic life, and the inestimable advantages of independence, to offer up life, liberty, and all the pursuits of temporal happiness, for the single privilege of preaching to others the unsearchable riches of Christ.

We hope we have succeeded in showing very sufficient reasons why our ecclesiastical economy is not, and could not be, modelled on the plan of the civil government of our country ; that, differing in the essential particulars of origin, design, and the obedience which they claim, they could not be expected to be the same in structure and organization, or that the members of the one should be entitled to the natural rights and privileges which necessarily belong to the citizens of the other.

Having disposed of the claim of natural right in the laity of our Church to a representation in the General Conference, we next proceed to consider the *expediency* of introducing such an innovation in our system of ecclesiastical polity. And we repeat, in the commencement of this inquiry, that it is exclusively on the question of *expediency* that the controversy ought to turn. The object and design of our organization being agreed upon, it will be admitted that no changes ought to be made which would in their consequences frustrate or retard the primary objects of our association : changes predicated on metaphysical speculation are always hazardous ; because there is no foreseeing their consequences, or the endless succession of changes to which they may lead. To mend that which experience has proved to be defective, or to introduce new regulations which it has pointed out as necessary, is not liable to the same objections, because no change is admitted until it is required by existing circumstances, and its utility acknowledged.

If, for instance, we admit a lay delegation into the General Conference *on the ground of its being the natural right of the laity*, the same argument will hold good in reference to their choice of their preachers, of their class-leaders, stewards, and all the officers of the Church ; and on the same principle the preachers might claim the right of exercising a choice



as to the place where, and the people amongst whom, they will bestow their labours: all these changes in our economy will grow legitimately out of the admission of this single principle. But if a lay delegation were admitted on the simple principle of utility or expediency, on the conviction that such a change in our economy would promote the common interest and the common design of our preachers and people, no other innovation could follow it unless supported by the same claims, and none will object to useful changes however numerous they may be.

What our system would become, if we were to consent to new model it on the abstract metaphysical principles so strenuously insisted upon by the reformers, is not now left to conjecture. A part of our disaffected members have already left us, and from different sections of the United States delegated representatives to meet in convention in the city of New-York, for the purpose of *creating a constitution* and form of government for the religious body by whom they were chosen. They did meet at the time and place appointed. The system of ecclesiastical polity which they devised has been printed and published, and we desire no better illustration of our previous remarks than this system affords. There were in this clerical and lay convention men of the highest standing both for piety and talents—men who had heretofore stood as high in the estimation of the Methodists themselves, both as ministers and men of natural and acquired ability, as any of the reformers who still remain amongst us. And yet the abstract principles for which they had contended, and for which our reformers still contend, forced upon them the admission of a regulation by which the laity elect their preachers—a regulation which it requires no extraordinary sagacity to see is totally incompatible with an itinerant ministry, but which, however, the convention aforesaid declare it to be their intention to institute and support.

From this view of the subject we cannot but regret that our reformers have spent so much of their time in the discussion of abstract principles—we regret that they have not met the question on the broad ground of utility, and directed their efforts to show the advantages which would result to the Methodist community from the changes they propose in our economy.

We shall commence this inquiry into the expediency of a lay and local-preacher representation by an important concession to the advocates of the measure, which is, that although we do not admit any abstract natural right in the laity and local preachers to claim such a representation, yet we do admit that if they can clearly show that such a measure would promote the interest of the whole Methodist family, and the great design of “spreading Scripture holiness over the world,” then there will be a moral obligation on the part of those who can grant the privilege to do so without delay; and we will add, that we have no doubt of the willing-

ness of our preachers to grant it whenever such a contingency *may* happen. As there is but one object common to both preachers and people, it will be as much the interest as the duty of the ministers to make such a change in our government, as soon as they shall be convinced of its tendency to promote the common good.

In estimating the advantages and disadvantages of a lay and local-preacher representation in the legislative\* department of the Church, we are met at the outset by an almost insurmountable difficulty. The proposition has not yet assumed any determinate shape or form. As we have before remarked, the reformers have chiefly employed themselves in discussing the abstract principle. They have not condescended to give us any plan by which this principle can be applied to our peculiar circumstances as a Church. Some important questions remain to be settled amongst themselves, relative to this matter, which they seem afraid to agitate, lest the discussion should make a breach in their own ranks. We recollect that, some time ago, the local preachers contended warmly for a separate delegation, and considered the proposal made by some writer in the Wesleyan Repository, to unite them in a common representation with the laity, as tending to degrade them from their ministerial character. Of late the local preachers seem to wave the claim, without, however, committing themselves, by any stipulations or engagements, to give up the right altogether. When this question comes to be decided between the lay and local-preacher reformers, we shall be mistaken if it is very harmoniously adjusted. Meantime, however, we are left to conjecture which of the three following plans of distributing the representatives among our ministry and membership have the greatest number of advocates.

1. The General Conference to consist of an equal number of travelling preachers, local preachers, and laymen.

2. To consist one half of travelling preachers, and the other half to be taken from the local preachers and laity indifferently ; or,

3. To be composed, according to the Rev. Mr. Shinn's plan, of local preachers and laymen exclusively,—the travelling preachers to “be content with being the executive officers of the Church,” without participating in the legislative power at all.

It is obviously a very difficult thing to determine what will be the effect of introducing the representative principle into our economy, without previously ascertaining what shape it is to assume, or under what modifications it is to be adopted : for although there are some objections common to all the above propositions, there are others which are peculiar to each.

If, for instance, we adopt the first, we shall have quite an anomaly in

\* We use the words legislature and legislative in an accommodated sense ; strictly speaking, the General Conference has no legislative powers—no power to make laws, but only “rules and regulations” to carry the laws of the Bible into effect.

legislation. Three distinct representations, charged with the particular interests *of*, and responsible only *to*, their own constituents, yet forming one legislative assembly, which, in the exercise of its functions, must often enact regulations applying exclusively to the constituents of one of these delegations. This will, indeed, be a novel exhibition—such a one as the Christian world has not yet seen; the invention is worthy of the great talents boasted by the reformers. It will be legislating at triangles, if it shall be found possible to keep the different sides of the triangle equal. Of this, however, we might doubt, had we not been often assured that the reformers possessed all the talents of the Church.

But, whether we adopt the first or the second proposition, the great republican principle of natural right must be given up, as the representation will not be apportioned with any regard to numbers. Such a constitution can only be based upon a distinct acknowledgment of *privileged orders*, claiming, in virtue of their privileges, a delegation wholly disproportioned to their numerical claims. Where will be the republicanism of allowing 1400 travelling preachers, or 3000 local preachers, as many representatives as 300,000 lay members of the Church?

As to the third proposition, it is almost too absurd to admit of serious consideration. It is not, indeed, liable to the same objection, as the two former; it is democratic enough, in all conscience. But the idea of excluding travelling preachers from the legislature of the Church, while nine-tenths of the business to be transacted there, must always, and exclusively, relate to travelling preachers; and while the information absolutely necessary to do any one act which such a conference could be called upon to do, could only be derived from these preachers, is a scheme which we had not supposed would have occurred, even to the wildest fancy, much less to the sober judgment of a Methodist minister.

We shall direct our examination to the second plan, both because, of the three, it is the least objectionable, and because it is the one which we have heard approbated by those reformers whose judgment we are most inclined to respect.

But before we proceed to examine the details of this scheme of representation, we deem it prudent to inquire, Where is the necessity for it? What good is expected to be accomplished by it? or what evils is it intended to remedy?

Is it intended to alter our articles of religion? The orthodoxy of these articles has not been questioned, even by our disaffected members themselves.

Are the lay and local members of the conference to effect any change in the moral discipline of the Church? With this, also, our opponents have publicly expressed their satisfaction. In fact, the Church did not *make* it, and, therefore, must not alter it. It is none other than that which is pre-

scribed by the gospel itself. Neither have the reformers signified any dissatisfaction with our order of worship, or the mode of administering the ordinances.

Now there remains nothing more in our economy, in reference to the laity, except those prudential regulations, which have been deemed necessary to enable the pastors of the Church to execute and enforce the discipline. Of these regulations, the principal complaint has been against class-meeting, as a term of membership, and the mode of bringing a delinquent member to trial. (Vid. Wesleyan Repository, vol. i, p. 329.) The first, namely, class-meeting, we believe, the membership are not disposed to abolish; on the contrary, the great majority of the Church consider it an indispensable provision, while we retain an itinerant ministry. Of the last, namely, the mode of trying a member accused of immorality, we will not say that it cannot be improved; but we do say that it is easier to find fault with it than to mend it. The conference, however, have already had their attention turned to this subject, and are certainly well disposed to make any alteration which may promote the interests of the Church.

Is it then to legislate on the temporal concerns of the Church, that laymen and local preachers are necessary in the General Conference? The General Conference have never attempted to interfere authoritatively with our temporal matters. The regulations they have made on this subject have been only recommendatory, for they have never annexed any penalty to the breach of them. It is true they have proposed measures, by which funds are to be raised, to build houses of worship and to support the ministry; but no member of the Church, or any particular society, has ever been disowned for refusing to comply with them; and they are departed from whenever local circumstances render the general provision inapplicable or inexpedient. The General Conference have never considered themselves authorized to levy *taxes* upon the laity, or to make any pecuniary contribution a condition of membership in the Church.

But it is said that it is dangerous to trust the ministry with exclusive legislative power,—that when they have been so trusted, they have always abused the trust; and we are referred to Church history, particularly of the Popish hierarchy, for the truth of the assertion. To this we answer, that in every instance of abuse to which we are referred, the Church was united with the civil power. It was the *unholy* alliance between the Church and the State that elevated the ministry above dependence on the voluntary contributions of their flocks for support, and taught them to worship mammon instead of the living and true God. It was the secular arm which enforced obedience to their mandates, when, being corrupted by the deceitfulness of riches, they taught for doctrines the commandments of men. It was the wealth and endowments with which the civil power had enriched the Church, that introduced luxury and idleness, pomp, and show, and

ignorance, and all manner of corruption into the priesthood. It was thus that the purity and simplicity of the gospel were obscured, and antichrist assumed the government of Christendom.

Now we will ask any man of common sense, whether there is in our economy anything which bears the most remote resemblance to all this. Our preachers are totally dependant upon the voluntary contributions of the laity; and we, thereby, have over them a positive and absolute control; for whenever their flocks shall withdraw their support, the preachers will be under the necessity of abandoning their present pastoral relation, and of betaking themselves to some secular occupation. These contributions depend for their continuance on the *affection* which the laity bear to their pastors. There can, therefore, be no danger of these pastors attempting to exercise any tyrannical authority over them. The case may be altered when we come to be governed by *local preachers*, who do not sustain the same dependant relation to the Church.

The travelling preacher who depends for bread, both for himself and his family, upon the good-will of the lay brethren, can have no temptation to any unwarrantable or odious exercise of authority over them. He will not desire to alienate the affections and incur the hostility of those whose friendship is so necessary to him. On the contrary, it will require no inconsiderable degree of firmness, and piety too, to support him in the due administration of discipline. There is more danger of his indulging a culpable lenity than of his exercising unwarrantable power.

But, on this subject, we are not left to conjecture. We can refer to our own history for *proof* of the fact, that our travelling ministry are not too fond of power to give it up when the good of the Church requires its relinquishment. They have voluntarily parted with power, and very important power too. It will be recollected that they once exercised the right of taking into their own body any candidate for the ministry whom *they* thought proper to receive, without any recommendation from the laity. They have long since relinquished this right; and now no person is received without a recommendation from a quarterly-meeting conference, which is chiefly composed of laymen. And he does not, ordinarily, get this recommendation without a previous one from the class of which he is a member.

Again: the stewards of circuits—officers, whose duties so essentially concern the travelling preachers—were formerly appointed by the preacher in charge. They must now be elected by the quarterly-meeting conference.

But this is not all. Formerly, the preacher received and turned out members, without consulting any other authority—and, perhaps, in the infancy of our Church, it was necessary he should have this power; but as soon as this necessity ceased, the right of expelling was relinquished, and a trial by his peers secured to every accused member of the Church,

together with the right of appeal to the quarterly-meeting conference, in case he thought justice was not done him. We have, therefore, the best possible assurance that our preachers covet no power but such as may be necessary to the good of the Church; and that whenever the authority now vested in them can be more advantageously deposited elsewhere, they will relinquish it without regret or delay.

It would then appear that this wonderful representation, so strenuously contended for, is almost without an object,—at any rate, none of sufficient importance to justify our running any great risk, or incurring great danger, in the attainment of it; for I suppose it will not be contended that the laity, or local preachers, ought to interfere in making those regulations which exclusively relate to travelling preachers, namely, the location of the different annual conferences, with their several metes and bounds, and the distribution of missionary labor; the Book Concern and the Charter Fund, which are their own exclusive property; the hearing and determining appeals from the annual conferences, which can only relate to, and be made by, travelling preachers. Nor will it, I hope, be contended that the local preachers or laity ought to elect the bishops, seeing that they exercise no authority whatever over them, but do exercise great authority over the itinerant ministers, having power to send them to any part of the United States. This would be so obviously unfair and unjust, that we do not suppose it would be claimed by the laity; and we are sure that the travelling preachers ought not to submit to it if it were claimed.

If it be contended that these bishops have too much power, we have but one reply to make—namely, that they have no power over any but travelling preachers. The travelling preachers gave them the power, and they can take it away. If they continue to delegate this power to the bishops, it is because they believe it indispensably necessary to the welfare and prosperity of the Church. It is a noble and generous sacrifice on the part of the preachers, which ought greatly to endear them to the people of their charge.

Now when we subtract from the business of legislation, which comes before the General Conference, all which exclusively relates to itinerant preachers, and all which is no longer a matter of discussion, because universally consented to by preachers and people, we think the conclusion we have drawn is safe—namely, that there remains no purpose of legislation which would justify the revolutionary project to introduce a lay and local representation into the General Conference.

If, then, we can show that the attempt to introduce into our economy a lay and local representation will endanger the peace and harmony of the Church, and tend to loosen the bonds which have heretofore held us together and enabled us to do so much good in the world, it will become us to pause and consider before we enter upon experiments which propose

to us uncertain and problematical benefits, while the evils to be encountered are immense and inevitable. We would not impugn the motives of individuals, but there may be some who have private and personal ends to answer by this unhappy controversy; and if there be, we do not expect them to weigh our arguments; their object will be to produce excitement, to arouse the passions, to alienate the affections of the people from the travelling preachers, and to carry their point at all events and at all hazards. To do this, however, it is not their policy to come out all at once with a clear development of their object. They will pause at every step, and feel the public pulse; as the fever increases they will proceed, and the moment of delirium will be seized to finish the great work of destruction.

We proceed to inquire what would be the probable effects of introducing into our economy the change proposed by the reformers.

The present number of travelling preachers in our connexion we may set down in round numbers at fourteen hundred, this calculation being sufficiently exact for our argument. The representation from this body of preachers in General Conference is fixed at one in seven, which will make the General Conference to consist of two hundred members. If we reduce this representation one-half, to make room for the lay and local delegation, it will give the travelling preachers a representation of one to every fourteen: as we may estimate two preachers to a circuit, it will take seven circuits to send a delegate to the General Conference from the travelling preachers; and as the lay and local representation is to consist of an equal number, it will take the same number of circuits to send a lay or local delegate.

The first question to be decided will be, how the lay and local delegates are to be chosen? No candidate can be proposed, who will be known, personally, to one in fifty of the Methodists of the seven circuits which compose his electoral district: and therefore they cannot judge of his fitness to represent them. Take a case from the circuits which lie immediately in the vicinity of the city of Baltimore—viz., Harford, Great Falls, Baltimore, Severn, Montgomery, Frederick, and Prince George's circuits; can any member of the Church be selected from any one of them, who is known personally, or even by reputation, to one in fifty of the members on the other circuits? If not, how will they be able to judge of the qualifications of those who may be proposed as candidates for their suffrages?

To obviate this difficulty, in the election of delegates by the members immediately, it will be necessary to institute an electoral college—composed of electors, chosen in each circuit separately, who shall meet at some appointed time and place, and choose a representative for the General Conference. These electors can only be chosen by the members in the class-meetings, for it will not be possible to assemble them together at one place, in order to take their votes. It will be a consequence growing

out of this arrangement, that each of the candidates for the honour of representing us in the General Conference, will have his elector in every circuit composing the district, who will be pledged to vote for said candidate, in the event of his being placed in the electoral college—precisely as it is now in this State in the election of President of the United States, and as it is in this city in the election of our mayor. We have now the preliminary arrangements for the combat, and the issue will be easily foreseen. The several candidates for the electoral college must of course visit the different class-meetings in the circuit, to set forth the pretensions and superior qualifications of the person whom he has been led to prefer, as a representative to the Church legislature. These claims may at first be modestly set forth—but presently opposition will enlist and warm his feelings; as the time of the election draws nearer, and the contest becomes doubtful, pride and partisan zeal will enter the lists. The disgrace and mortification of defeat, the glory and triumph of victory, urge on the combatants, and the “On, brethren, on!” of the Rev. Mr. Snethen,\* will everywhere be heard, animating the competitors, and encouraging the contest.

The feelings of the members will soon catch the kindling fire—personal friendship for the candidates, or the interest they may feel for the measures they severally propose to carry in the General Conference, cannot fail of effect; parties and caucuses will be formed, which will necessarily alienate their affections from each other; brotherly love no longer continuing, strife, and envy, and malice, evil-speaking, misrepresentation, and slander, will take the place of those fruits of the Spirit, peace, long-suffering, and meekness, and of that humility which has so long taught us each to esteem the other better than himself. From such scenes, the more pious, humble, and retiring, though obviously the most competent part of the membership, will seek to hide themselves, and mourn over calamities they cannot control; while the froward and assuming, the vain and the self-conceited, will be brought forward, and obtain, by their party zeal and desire of distinction, the suffrages of their brethren. Beloved reader—brother in Christ—I am no prophet, neither the son of a prophet, but I venture to predict without the spirit of prophecy, that this is but a very faint representation of the scenes which will certainly follow the changes which you are urged to effect in the government of the Methodist Church. Our class-meetings, heretofore so blessed to us as a peculiar privilege, where we have been accustomed to speak and to think only of spiritual things, will then become, over this whole continent, so many arenas for electioneering strife and contention; where brother will seek to traduce and misrepresent brother, in order to lessen his influence in an approach-

\* See the war-whoop address in the *Mutual Rights*, vol. iii, page 248.



ing election; and where feuds and personal enmities will be engendered, fearful in their consequences, and interminable in their duration.

I care not whether elections in our Church be for preachers, class-leaders, or delegates to the General Conference, or the annual conferences, only make them of sufficient importance to excite competition, and awaken that desire for distinction which finds a place in every human bosom until it is cast out by perfect love, and the same destructive consequences will inevitably follow, as long as man continues what he is—a weak and fallible being. Brethren, are you prepared for all this? Can it be possible that your itinerant ministers have governed the Church so badly, have so entirely forfeited your confidence, as to render it necessary thus to jeopardize the peace and prosperity of the Church? We cannot believe it; for we have seen nothing in their measures or in their administration but what has manifested the most ardent desire for your happiness, here and hereafter: and we do most sincerely believe that no people were ever favoured with a ministry who could more appropriately appeal to them in the language of the apostle, “Receive us; we have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man,” and “ye are in our hearts to die and to live with you.” We shall be told, perhaps, that our fears and predictions are all imaginary; that *Christians* cannot be led into the improprieties and disorders which we have described. Would that it were so! But to believe it, were to resist the evidence of both history and experience. Who can doubt the piety of the Presbyterians, and the Puritans, in the reign of Charles the first, and during the protectorate of Oliver Cromwell; yet, who that has the cause of religion at heart, does not blush for the excesses into which they ran? And were we at liberty to advert to circumstances which have taken place among the religious denominations in our own country, and even in some *Methodist societies*, they would fully justify all our anticipations. But some of those scenes are too recent, and the wounds received in them are not sufficiently healed, to make it safe to expose them. Many of the actors are yet living, and could not bear it; and we are taught to tread lightly even on the ashes of the dead.

But we are unfortunately too well furnished with examples much nearer home. The history of this controversy bears irresistible testimony to the position, that a profession of religion will not save us from the consequences incident to opposition and contest among the professors. Let any man look over the pages of the Wesleyan Repository and the Mutual Rights, and doubt this position if he can. He will see the merciless gladiators cutting and thrusting without pity or remorse; though they have still some shame, for their faces are concealed. He will see a periodical work which was probably intended, originally, as a medium through which brethren might calmly and dispassionately interchange their senti-

ments ; but which the heat of debate, and the mortification of disappointed ambition, have converted into a vehicle of anonymous slander and misrepresentation. Yet the editors and the Union Society, who support the work, are all Methodists ; and some even Methodist preachers ! After this example who can doubt the excesses into which we would be hurried by the heat of party feeling, in a periodically-contested election for Church officers or representatives ?

The melancholy fact is, that all are not Christians in heart who are so in profession ; and among those who are sincere, many are weak and credulous, and are easily led astray by those who have less piety but more address and cunning than themselves. We have had to lament that many of our members are led into indiscretions in civil elections ; but when you add to the ordinary excitements of an electioneering contest, the invigorating influence of mistaken, but honest religious zeal, we should expect to see our Church elections exciting more passion, enthusiasm, and intolerance, than are evinced by the partisans of any other cause whatever.

It would be some alleviation of the evils which we anticipate from these Church elections, if the effects would subside after the immediate causes of the excitement were withdrawn,—if those who became embittered against their brethren, by opposition and defeat, would cool down after the election was over, and return to their former good feelings and religious intercourse. But this would not be the case. The disappointed candidates would be impelled by their self-esteem to attribute their want of success to anything rather than a want of proper qualifications. They would cover the disgrace of defeat, by imputing to their more successful rivals improper measures and unfair dealing, and indemnify their mortified pride by withdrawing from the Church, and taking with them all the partisans over whom they could exert sufficient influence ; and thus a fruitful source of schisms and divisions would be incorporated into the very constitution of the Methodist community.

In civil society the disappointed candidates for office, and their partisans, may complain of ill treatment in an electioneering canvass ; but they have no means of revenging themselves on the community. Whatever be their mortification or their resentments, they must, nevertheless, sit down quietly and obey the laws, and pay their taxes as heretofore. They cannot withdraw from the community, or renounce their allegiance, without abandoning their country ; and to do that may be more inconvenient than to digest their mortification at home. In short, their connexion with the community is matter of necessity, and not of choice. But religious societies are not held together by necessity, but by the bond of love. Whenever, therefore, they cease to be “kindly-affectioned one to another,” their union is a rope of sand, which the slightest incident will break. While

this bond of love and Christian fellowship remains unimpaired, no force or fraud, no peril or danger, can dissolve their connexion; but array them in opposition, the one to the other, and their separation is inevitable.

But there is another objection to the proposed lay and local representation in our Church, which lies at the very root of the matter. The fact is, that if we were to consent to run all the risks, and encounter all the evils which these elections would inevitably produce, we should, after all, have a representation in name only, not in reality. I suppose it will be admitted that the representative should always be responsible to his constituents; and to make him so, his constituents should have some means of ascertaining how he deports himself in the legislative body to which he is sent. Now with regard to representatives from the laity and local preachers of our Church, this would be impossible. It has been already shown, that it would be impossible for one in fifty of them to have any personal intercourse with him, or even to know him; and as there will be no stenographers employed to publish his speeches, or his votes and proceedings, it could not be ascertained whether he properly represented the sentiments of his constituents or not. That part of the Conference proceedings which is necessarily embodied in the Discipline, would be known as the general result of their deliberations, but the individual part which the different members of the Conference took in these measures, would not be known to one in a hundred of their constituents—much less could they know what measures had been severally proposed and advocated by them, and which were rejected by the Conference. The sum of the whole is, then, that this mighty representation would be a solemn farce after all, without any adequate object in the Conference, and acting without that salutary sense of responsibility which the supervision of their constituents alone can impose.

We will now proceed to inquire into the practicability of the scheme. Suppose the delegates elected, and the next question to be asked, is, Who is to bear their travelling expenses to and from the Conference—the delegate, or his constituents? And how are they to be provided for during the session? If it be answered, that their expenses will be borne as those of the travelling preachers are now provided for; we reply, that the case of the one kind of delegates is not at all similar to that of the other. In the first place, the preachers, on their road to and from the Conference, labour all the way in their vocation. They are everywhere received and entertained as missionaries—as a kind of common property, in which every member of their Church has an equal interest. The preacher, on his part, is accustomed to be entertained by the membership without making any pecuniary compensation; he has only to preach to them, and to pray with them, and they consider themselves amply remunerated.

Now, it will not be so with the lay delegates. They must travel as other laymen do. They will not condescend to ask for accommodations of strangers, but will pay for them at the public houses.

If the reader will pardon a homely illustration, for the sake of its appositeness, we would say that there would be about as much difference between the expenses of a travelling preacher and a layman getting to Conference, as between a sailor and a landsman getting to Europe. The preacher and the sailor "work their passages;" the layman and the landsman must pay for theirs. A veteran preacher, at the General Conference of 1820, came from South Carolina, without expending more than two dollars, and that was chiefly for ferriage.

In the second place, we know that some difficulty has been always experienced in providing for the preachers at the General Conference; and hence it may be fairly questioned, whether the members would accommodate the lay delegates at all: and, on the other hand, as these delegates will not have been accustomed to receive gratuitous entertainment of strangers, they will not feel free to receive two or three months' board for nothing. If this should turn out to be the case, then we must add the expenses of boarding, lodging, &c., to the travelling expenses of the delegate; and without any allowance for the loss of time, or for the injury which his business will sustain by the negligence or improvidence of those who superintend his affairs while he is from home, the expenses of a delegate will be no inconsiderable sum.

We think it will be impossible for the distant sections of our Church to find men who are able to meet these expenses, and give the time which the duties of a delegate will necessarily require. They cannot be found amongst any of those whose personal attention is necessary to their callings in life. The farmer, the merchant, the lawyer, the physician, and the tradesman, cannot spare the time, even if they could afford the expense; and the idle may not furnish the very best materials for representatives to the Church legislature.

If, however, men of wealth and leisure can be everywhere found, as willing as they are able, to go at their own expense to the General Conference, it would become a question of no ordinary interest to the Methodists, whether they ought to adopt a system of government which would make rich men absolutely necessary to them, or which would exclude from their councils the brethren of less fortune, though, possibly, possessed of better gifts and more experience.

Let it also be remembered, that if we make rich men necessary to us, we cannot exercise discipline over them; and if our discipline is given up, our existence as a Church will not long survive it.

We think it must be obvious, that before the Methodists can have a lay and local representation, they must provide funds to meet, at least, the

expenses of the delegates, if not to make them some compensation for their loss of time while engaged in the service of the Church. To raise these funds in some districts will be utterly impossible, for they are not able to pay their preachers the small stipends to which they are entitled. It is well known, that in many, if not most of the conferences, such is the amount of deficiencies in the circuits, that after all the collections from the other circuits and stations are brought into conference, the preachers seldom have been able to divide amongst those who are deficient, more than fifty cents in the dollar.

We are at a loss to know how those circuits which cannot pay their preachers, are to raise the money to pay lay and local delegates.

But this is not all. The remote districts, many of which are among those that are least able to pay their delegates, will have to incur much greater expenses than those which are located nearer the General Conference, as their delegates will have farther to travel. This would not only be oppressive, but unjust. As the representation is intended for the common benefit, no one part of the membership ought to pay more than another.

From these considerations, it will appear, that the representatives must be paid out of some common fund, to be provided by the whole Church : and, further, that this fund, as it is intended to meet expenses that must *certainly* accrue, cannot be looked for from sources that are uncertain or contingent ; and, therefore, must not depend upon the voluntary contributions of the members of the Church. It can, then, only be raised by direct *taxation* ; and to levy this tax, will be one of the many new powers which must be given to the General Conference when constituted as the reformers would have it. To levy a tax, without having the power to enforce the collection of it, would be an absurdity ; and I can see but one means of enforcing the collection, and that will be, to turn those out of the Church who do not comply with the requisition. Here, then, will be a new condition of membership, and we hope there are few of us who would consent to hold our membership upon any *pecuniary* condition whatever. But if we do consent to this tax, how shall it be levied ? Will it be by an equal assessment on property ? or will it be a poll tax ? The first would be vexatious, and give rise to endless disputes, and the other would be both unjust and oppressive. In short, look at this Utopian scheme on whatever side you will, if you only bring it near enough to see it in its details, it will appear equally absurd and impracticable.

It may be alleged, however, that if the right of representation be granted, and each electoral district be allowed to raise, by individual subscription, the amount necessary to pay their own delegate ; those who do not send delegates, will have no right to complain, if others, more liberal, should avail themselves of the privilege.

We reply, that this would be true, in reference to those who have the means, and decline to avail themselves of the advantages accorded to them, but will not apply to those who *cannot* send delegates for want of the means: these would have a right to complain; not, indeed, because others enjoyed a blessing in which they could not participate, but because their former situation was made worse, by the advantages accorded to their wealthier brethren. This will be obvious from the following considerations:—the regulations by which the whole Church is now governed, are made by those who have no local or fixed residence; they may be in Maine one year, and in Alabama or Missouri the next. They can therefore have no local preferences or partialities. Circulating through the whole connexion, they not only have a common interest and a common feeling with the members on each and every part of their pastoral charge, but they necessarily acquire a knowledge of the local circumstances and particular necessities of our membership, in the different sections of the United States. Now, if the interests of the laity were confided to a partial representation, chiefly, if not entirely, composed of delegates from the circuits and stations in the vicinity of the General Conference, the situation of those sections which could not be represented by their own delegates would be very materially altered for the worse. They will then be legislated for, not only by those who are in no way responsible to them, but by those who do not even know them, and, of consequence, are totally unacquainted with their sentiments or their circumstances. So far, then, from enjoying new privileges by the contemplated changes in our ecclesiastical polity, they would be robbed of the equal advantages which they now enjoy.

It is easy to foresee, without pretending to any extraordinary sagacity, that such a state of things would necessarily bring about a dismemberment of our ecclesiastical union. The more remote annual-conference districts, not being able to send representatives to the General Conference, where the other districts were represented, would withdraw from the confederacy, and institute a legislature of their own more conveniently located. And if this should be the case, what can we promise ourselves from a local or lay representation in the Church government, which will compensate us for the loss of those benefits which we, as well as society at large, have heretofore derived from that community of effort, consolidation of means, and unity of purpose, in which all the parts and members of the great Methodist family at present harmonize, and by which we have been held in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace?

Here we had intended to have concluded our observations; but since most of the foregoing pages were written, we have been favoured with a plan of representation and of reform, by the Rev. Alexander M'Caine. It will be necessary to bestow a few remarks upon this scheme, notwithstanding

ing the author has taken pains to have it understood to be entirely his own, and that he is not authorized to speak for his coadjutors in the cause of reform. When, however, we advert to the acknowledged talents of the author, the high standing he occupies in the ranks of radicalism, and the experience which he has had, both as a travelling and local preacher, we must be led to suppose, that if a better plan could have been devised he would have fallen upon it; and that, therefore, the outline before us is the *ne plus ultra* of human invention and contrivance.

We give the following abstract of Mr. M'Caine's plan of Church government:—

“*First.* Let the name of bishop, and the episcopal *office*, as it now exists among us, be put away forever.

“*Second.* Abolish the office of presiding elders.

“*Third.* Let each annual conference be clothed with legislative powers, under the restrictions of a legitimate constitution.

“*Fourth.* Let each annual conference be composed of itinerant ministers who have travelled a given number of years; together with representatives from the local ministry and laity.

“And let the preachers of each annual conference be stationed by their own superintendent; or by the superintendent, and a committee of travelling preachers, elected annually from among themselves for that purpose.

“*Fifth.* Let each annual conference elect its own superintendent, whose period of service should not continue more than four years ———.

“*Sixth.* Let the General Conference be composed of the superintendents and a given number of representatives from the annual conferences. Let their attention be confined to doctrines, alterations or amendments of the constitution, general missions, and such other business as cannot well be confined to any one annual conference. The qualifications of its members, and its powers and jurisdiction, to be defined and settled by the constitution.

“*Seventh.* Let the local ministers and the laity be represented in the legislative department of the Church, whether legislation be assigned to the general or annual conferences.”

The reader will perceive, in the first place, that all we have said on the danger of elections in our Church will apply with *fourfold* force to the above plan; for, instead of an election once in *four* years for representatives to the General Conference, we must have one *every* year for delegates to the annual conferences. Nor is this all; these conferences are to be annually agitated by an election for a stationing committee, and once in four years for delegates to the General Conference, and a superintendent.

The tempest of electioneering strife will never cease. The sun of

peace and reconciliation will scarcely break forth before we shall again hear the rumbling thunder. There will be no interval in which bleeding charity may heal her wounds—when the rekindled sympathies of brotherly kindness may again unite the broken bonds of Christian affection and love.

*Secondly.* The expenses of the delegates will be doubled by this plan,—for we shall have two sets of them, one to the annual and another to the General Conference. The preachers now entitled to a seat in the Baltimore Annual Conference are about one hundred and thirty; the same number of local and lay delegates will give an aggregate of two hundred and sixty persons, to be provided for by the members of the Church where the annual conference holds its session. This would be utterly impracticable, and Mr. M'Caine seems to be aware of it, for he proposes to exclude all the travelling preachers from the annual conference who have not travelled "*a certain number of years*," now, if he reduces the number by excluding all who have not travelled ten years, he will still have a conference of lay, local, and itinerant delegates, for whom any station would find it difficult to provide. In the meantime, the travelling preacher who had laboured nine years or under, would be excluded from a seat in the conference where his character undergoes an annual scrutiny,—where the committee and superintendent who have the control of his destiny—who appoint, or send him to labour where they please—are chosen without his vote or concurrence; and elected, too, in part, by local preachers, over whom the superintendent and stationing committee are to have no control whatever, and who labour in the ministry or let it alone, as they please! This is too bad. If the Methodists are prepared to add to the already heavy burdens and hardships of their travelling preachers the grievous oppression proposed by Mr. M'Caine, the time of our dissolution as a community is nearer at hand than our worst enemies could have expected.

But the office of presiding elder is to be abolished. We own that we had been led at one time to think these officers no longer necessary: but we find, upon more particular inquiry, that our situation did not command a view of the whole ground. "Local men have local views," and we looked only to city stations, and small, long-settled circuits: an enlarged view of our widely-extended connexion, together with the information we have received from those who have been long and extensively engaged in the work, have led us to change our opinions; and those who are desirous of making no changes but such as are recommended by obvious utility, are referred to the observations on this office, in the notes to our Discipline, published in 1798. Whenever the presiding elders shall cease to be necessary, the office will be abolished by the preachers themselves, as they can have no motive for retaining the office when it has become useless to the Church.

But Mr. M'Caine is not satisfied with destroying the office of presiding elder. He insists, also, on destroying our episcopacy—that is, our



general superintendency—and electing a superintendent for each conference. Now, we would ask, under this arrangement how will the different conferences contribute to the supply of each other's necessities? How are the preachers to be sent out of one conference district to another? How is the Carolina Conference, for instance, to be aided by the surplus preachers in the Baltimore Conference. Each conference possessing a separate and independent control of its members, may refuse to part with any of its preachers, whatever be the necessity for their assistance in other districts; or, if they be willing to part with any, they may not incline to send away those whose talents and usefulness qualify them for the service required elsewhere. The interchange must be a subject of negotiation between the different conferences, and will require each to keep near the others authorized plenipotentiaries, or other diplomatic agents. Instead of this complicated machinery, how simple and efficient is the present plan! The bishops or general superintendents, elected by the representatives of the whole body of itinerant preachers, travel throughout the whole work, preside at the several annual conferences, make themselves acquainted with the wants of each, and are clothed with power to distribute the labourers as the wants of the different parts of the vineyard may require. They are thus the common bond of connexion between the different annual conferences—the common representatives of their various wants, and the medium through which they severally minister to each other's necessities.

But Mr. M'Caine would not only break this common bond of union, but the more certainly to effect the dissolution of the ecclesiastical confederacy which so happily subsists between the different annual conferences, he would clothe each conference with legislative powers, by which can only be meant the power to make discipline, and the regulations according to which discipline is to be exercised and enforced. The consequence would be, that each conference would have a discipline of its own, and what would be forbidden to a Methodist in one conference might be allowed and sanctioned in another; we should thus be dissociated by the very terms of membership, and be no longer brethren of the same household and family.

It is true, the author of this scheme proposes to hold us together by a General Conference, composed of lay, local, and itinerant delegates from the several annual conferences; but independently of the difficulty and expense of assembling them, the reverend author seems greatly at a loss to find them business after he gets them together, as he had already clothed the annual conferences with legislative powers. He seems to have had in his eye the different State legislatures, and the Congress of the United States; but the fatal want of analogy which runs through this whole scheme of modelling the Church polity upon the plan of our civil institutions, is peculiarly obvious here. There are no foreign relations to manage and provide for—

no foreign commerce to regulate—no judicatories to establish—no taxes to levy—no imposts to lay, &c., &c. The projector is, therefore, under the necessity of confining his Methodist congress to mending the constitution and the DOCTRINES of the Church. Our doctrines, we hope, are not *now* to be settled; and as to the constitution which he proposes, we have never heard of a government that had declared to the world a determination to revise and amend their constitution and form of government every four years. It is true, all good governments provide the means of mending their constitution when experience shall have shown it to be defective; but Mr. M'Caine is the first who ever proposed a plan of government in which the supreme legislature should be required to meet periodically to *tinker at the constitution*. As to the general missions he speaks of, it is obvious that no conference which meets only once in four years, could superintend or provide for any mission whatsoever. Our missions have heretofore been conducted by those annual conferences who were located nearest the field of labour; and there the business ought to remain, whatever other schemes of reform be adopted.\*

But the author is not tenacious of his plan; only grant a lay and local representation in the legislature of the Church, and he is willing to give up all the other "items" of his project. "But representation from the local ministry and laity, by the help of God, he will never relinquish." We must say, that if he believes all that he has written in the previous part of his book, and would be satisfied with *this*, he offers a *base and disgraceful compromise*. If we believed, as he asserts, that the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church originated in falsehood, and has been perpetuated by fraud and forgery, we would disdain to make any compromise at all with the authors of it: we would be satisfied with nothing which did not go to overthrow the whole establishment, and wipe from the remembrance of all men this foul blot on the character of Methodism.

Mr. M'Caine ought to have given us his plan for defraying the expenses of his double delegation. He must have discovered that local preachers, at least, are not disposed to attend conferences at their own expense, and without some compensation for their time. They have had a conference of their own, in which they have been permitted to manage their own affairs, in their own way, ever since 1820. One of these conferences was assigned to each presiding-elder district, a small space, compared to the extent of an annual-conference district; yet, in most places, they either never met at all, or have dissolved themselves, finding it impossible to induce the local brethren to attend, on account of the expense and loss of time which was involved in the duty.

It must not be alleged that the business which the local conferences

\* When this was written, we had no foreign missions, except, perhaps, something of that character in Liberia.

were empowered to do, was not of sufficient consequence to induce their attendance ; for they alone could grant and renew licenses to local preachers—had an appellate jurisdiction, in the case of any of their members who might think themselves aggrieved in any court below—and, moreover, were alone authorized to recommend each other to deacon's and elder's orders. Nay, in the memorial of the Baltimore local or district conference to the General Conference of 1824, (Vide Wesleyan Repository, vol. iii, page 476,) they speak in the highest terms of the utility of this association ; and felicitate themselves and the connexion generally on the practical good already experienced from them. And yet this very district conference, at their last meeting, did not consist of more than ten out of, perhaps, one hundred members.

Upon the whole, the reverend and learned author's scheme of representation—the result of seven years' discussion in the Wesleyan Repository, and the Mutual Rights—is more imperfect in its organization, and destructive in its tendencies, than any of the plans heretofore suggested. The publishing of it, however, will have one good effect—it will confirm the opinion now entertained by the great body of our ministry and membership, that there is no analogy between civil governments and ecclesiastical communities ; and, therefore, that all attempts to model the regulations of the one upon the institutions of the other are necessarily futile and impracticable.

We proceed now to make a few remarks on some lighter matters, which could not well be brought in before. And first, we have been repeatedly told that nothing is required by the reformers, but what obtains in the economy of other Churches. We assert, on the contrary, that nothing like the government proposed by our reformers exists in any Church with which we are acquainted ; unless it be that which was adopted by the seceders from the Methodist Episcopal Church, who held their convention in the city of New-York during the past year, and who have so handsomely parodied and burlesqued the declaration of independence of these United States.

The representative government proposed by our reformers, so far as we can judge of it from the general outlines they have given, is not at all on the plan of the Protestant Episcopal Church in this country : for *they* have a house of bishops as an independent branch of the legislature, the members of which, individually, hold their situation for life ; and collectively, have a veto or negative on all the acts of the lower house, composed of clerical and lay delegates. As to the argument in favour of the practicability of a lay delegation in our Church, drawn from the attendance of such delegates in the State and general conventions of the Protestant Episcopal Church, we admit, that *we* may find it practicable too when we can consent that our delegates shall require nothing more to make them eligible than the mere circumstance of their attending public

worship in our congregations, and contributing to the support of our ministry—when we agree to delegate the power of legislating for the Church to those who are not communicants, make no profession of experimental religion, and who are not subject to the discipline of the Church. We may, perhaps, find among these enough who are able to bear the expenses of such a dignity; but *in* the Church not many rich men are found, as it is no easier for rich men to be saved now than in the primitive age of Christianity.

But if the proposed government does not resemble the Protestant Episcopal Church, much less does it conform to that of our Presbyterian brethren; for with them there are no popular, periodical elections for lay delegates. The ruling elders alone being eligible, and these officers being appointed for life, or during good behaviour, a man may be a Presbyterian all his lifetime, and never have an opportunity to show his consequence, or try his popularity, in a contested election for lay delegates.

The Congregationalists and Baptists having no *general legislative assembly*, do not of course furnish the model from which our reformed plan of government is to be drawn: and as to the Friends, there is never any voting among them, on any occasion whatever; and perhaps there is no part of the peculiar government of that exemplary people which has tended so much to preserve them in peace and fellowship, as this feature of their very interesting economy.

Among the complaints which have been made against our present system of government, the originator and leader of the projected reformation denounces the rule of our Discipline which requires the meeting in class as a condition of membership. (Vid. Wes. Rep., vol. i, p. 329.) He contends that it is an unscriptural condition, and that the Church has no right to impose it. It is not objected that these meetings are useless, or hurtful; on the contrary, they are acknowledged to be a means of grace, eminently calculated to promote the spiritual interests of the Church,—and we may add, that to a Church under the direction of an itinerating ministry they are indispensable; for such a ministry could not, without the aid of this, or some similar institution, effectually execute the duties of a pastor. The limited term of a preacher's appointment to any circuit or station, renders it impossible for him to form an intimate personal acquaintance with the members of his charge, and hence he could not know whether they were walking as becometh the gospel,—whether they were individually growing in grace, or backsliding in heart from God. Without it, no moral discipline could be enforced, no pastoral duties performed, or any unity of sentiment in doctrines preserved amongst the members of the Church. Now, surely, that which is confessedly necessary to the promotion of piety, peace, and love—without which the spirituality of the Church would decay, and her communion be thrown open to those

who have neither the fear of God before their eyes, nor his love in their hearts—cannot be without Scripture warrant. The propriety of such conditions of communion must be clearly inferable from the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, which the Church is bound to inculcate and enforce upon all her members. But if the reformers insist upon changing the rule which makes it obligatory upon our members to meet in class because there is no positive Scriptural command for it, they must also give up infant baptism, and the administration of the communion to females, for there is no such commandment for either the one or the other.

Before we conclude, we must be allowed to enter our protest against the appeal which has been made to the world against our government and discipline; because we deny the competency of that tribunal to try the matter at issue. We deny it, not only on constitutional but on Scriptural grounds. We are commanded by an authority higher than that of any temporal power not to be conformed to the world; and, of course, may not make any compromise with it, in anything which relates to our duty as Christians. The people of the world may come to us, but we must not go over to them, in matters concerning either our doctrines or discipline. The tribunal, then, before which the Rev. Mr. Shinn has arraigned the Church, has no jurisdiction in the case, either original or appellate. Besides, this tribunal has long since prejudged the case; and the charge of tyranny, and inordinate love of power, which is preferred against us, will be considered as conclusively proved, when the reverend prosecutor shall have cited against our Church the restrictions imposed on her members, in reference to dancing, card-playing, and theatrical amusements. The *world* will, no doubt, consider these as very arbitrary restrictions on the *natural rights* of our members; but we shall not repeal them, nor suffer the violation of them, with impunity, notwithstanding.

The appeal which our reformers have made “to the citizens of the United States” against us in this controversy is, therefore, equally futile and cruel: *futile*, because it is not borne out by any plausible pretext; and *cruel*, because it is intended to enlist the political feelings of the community against their brethren, in order to compel them, by persecutions from *without*, to submit to changes in their Church polity, which sophistry and abuse from *within* had failed to accomplish. If our reformers should succeed in making our fellow-citizens believe that we have become, or are in danger of becoming, enemies to the government of our country, by the peculiar organization of our ecclesiastical economy—and thereby bring upon us all the evils and sufferings of a political persecution—they may gratify their revenge, but they will, nevertheless, fail in their ulterior object. We have not *so learned Christ* as not to be willing to suffer for righteousness’ sake. While we continue to believe our present regulations tend to promote the best interests of the Redeemer’s

kingdom, we will not abandon them, though we are called to suffer the loss of all temporal things. While we so believe, they are, as respects us, identified with the whole system of truth and righteousness; and, in such a cause, we are commanded, by the Redeemer himself, not to fear them who can kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do,—but to fear Him who, after he hath killed the body, can cast both body and soul into hell.

We confess, however, that we entertain no fears from the misrepresentations which have been made to the public with respect to our Church government, or its anti-republican influence upon the members of our religious community. The public cannot be expected to be much interested in our *family* disputes and differences; and, as to our politics, we are known to be as much divided in opinion as any other part of the community. Our reformers, with all their fine declamation, will not be able to convince our fellow-citizens that our ecclesiastical polity exerts any unfavourable influence on our political opinions,—or that it has any political influence at all,—when it is well known that the Methodists have been divided on every measure which has agitated the country since the adoption of the constitution. The public will not believe the Methodist system of government is inimical to the state, while they perceive that it has obviously made those who have come under its discipline better citizens, as well as better men. We hope our countrymen will permit us still to regulate our Church affairs in our own way,—and that if they condescend to judge of our ecclesiastical system at all, they will judge of the tree by the fruit it bears, and not by the fine metaphysical speculations of our disaffected brethren. We hope they will not attempt to force us, notwithstanding the appeal of our reformers, to model our Church government on the plan of the civil government of our country, excellent as it is; for, really, it does not suit us—we are not competent to the management of so complicated a machinery; and the simple design of our association renders it totally unnecessary to us—it would “embarrass us with too much regulation.” Besides, we doubt whether our reformers are aware of the consequences that would grow out of this principle of conformity. If we admit the political obligation to conform our ecclesiastical polity to the civil constitution of our country, it would follow, that in every country to which the Methodists shall hereafter carry the gospel and succeed in forming a Church, they will be under the same necessity to conform their Church government to the existing civil establishments of that country—whether they be republican, monarchical, aristocratical, or absolutely despotic. And, what is worse, the Methodist Episcopal Church must, on this principle, not only change her present government, but we must have *two* governments,—for a part of the Church is in Canada,\* where

\* The Canada Annual Conference was, at the time this was written, a part of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

the civil government is monarchical. If it be true that an argument which proves too much refutes itself, no argument was ever more completely overthrown than that which is drawn from the constitution of the United States in favour of the revolution in our Church government, contended for by our reformers.

### CONCLUSION.

We have shown, in the preceding observations, that the question which the Methodists are called upon to decide is one of no ordinary importance. It is not about some modification or amendment of the present system that we contend. The question to be settled is, whether we will *abolish* the present system of Church polity, under which we have so long prospered, and through the instrumentality of which so much good has been done, and adopt a *new one*; whether, refusing to profit by the lessons of experience, we shall let go what we have proved to be good, and enter upon a course of *experiments* in Church government,—experiments, too, which propose advantages, the attainment of which is at least doubtful, but which involve, in their consequences, evils fearful in amount and interminable in duration. To this we object, because,—

1. We have seen that we are not bound to enter upon these experiments by Scriptural authority; for the Scriptures have imposed no exclusive form of government on the Church, but have left her to regulate her outward economy according to the circumstances in which she may happen to be placed.

2. We have shown that the right of representation in the laity and local preachers is not, and cannot be, founded on an analogy between the natural rights of the citizen and the conventional rights of a member of our Church, for no such analogy exists. It is vain to appeal to the civil institutions of our country, or the principles on which they are so happily founded, in support of these fancied rights; for our civil and ecclesiastical governments have no attributes in common with each other. They originated differently—are instituted with intentions totally different—and severally exercise an authority in which there is no one point of resemblance. The specious appeal, then, to our political feelings is declamation, not argument—it may amuse, but it cannot convince us; we must have some better reasons for the measure before we risk an experiment, the result of which no sagacity can fully appreciate, and the evil effects of which no human wisdom may be able to repair.

3. We have insisted that no changes ought to be made which have no better foundation than abstract metaphysical speculation on the natural rights of mankind: because such speculations are endless; and if once admitted as principles on which changes in our government are to be

predicated, there is no anticipating the results or the consequences. We have not objected to any alterations, the utility of which can be clearly pointed out; but we are not willing to alter our economy on any other terms. That which experience has proved to be eminently useful, we beg leave to retain, however it may be cavilled at by would-be metaphysicians and philosophers: for we are exhorted to prove all things, and hold fast that which is good; and we believe the advice is as wholesome as the authority is unexceptionable.

4. The utility or expediency of a lay and local representation has not been shown by the reformers. As we have seen, they have contented themselves with the discussion of the principle in the abstract, without condescending to tell us how it can be applied with advantage, or even with safety, to our peculiar circumstances as a Church.

5. The reformers have not pointed out any object of legislation, which remains to be effected by our General Conference, that demands the aid of an additional body of delegates: and we have seen that if we subtract from the business of the Conference, all that is already done to the satisfaction of our reformers, and all that relates exclusively to the travelling preachers, there will remain no subject of legislation which could justify us in putting anything to hazard for the purpose of effecting the wonderful project with which we have been so long entertained. And we think it is clearly obvious, that it *would* put to hazard much that has been heretofore deemed of vital importance. All that is valuable in peace and concord, all that is commendable in brotherly kindness and charity, would be put in jeopardy at every successive election; and how many elections it would give rise to, it is impossible to foretell.

6. There is one argument against the utility and even the fundamental principle of this scheme of representation, which, if the reader has not particularly remarked, we beg him again to review, both because we think it most conclusive, and because it applies with equal force to all the different plans which have been suggested, or which *can* be proposed, on this subject. It shows the relation of the delegate to his constituents to be *necessarily irresponsible*, from the impossibility of their exercising that oversight of his individual doings which would be necessary to secure the faithful representation of their sentiments and circumstances in the legislature of the Church.

7. Of the *impracticability* of this scheme of reform, we think the impartial reader will, by this time, have been fully convinced. We have clearly demonstrated that it cannot be effected without authorizing the conference to levy a DIRECT TAX on the members, and of expelling from the Church all who refuse or neglect to pay the imposition.

The consequences which would grow out of such a measure as this are not at all conjectural, whatever may be said of the "visionary theories" which belong to the contemplated reformation.



In short, the project presented by our disaffected members, is a bold and reckless innovation, for the adoption of which we have neither the plea of necessity, the prospect of utility, nor the sanction of experience. Necessity there cannot be, because it is acknowledged that the success of the present system, in effecting the great objects of its institution, is without parallel in the modern history of the Christian Church. The utility of the proposed changes is not the ground on which their advocates have urged them, or on which they have relied for success. And as to experience, all the lessons which it teaches go to show that every system of Church polity is dangerous in proportion to the contests for pre-eminence and distinction which it will produce; for these contentions must inevitably loosen the only bonds by which a Christian community can be held together—namely, those of charity and brotherly-kindness. And we confidently believe, that whoever considers, without partiality or prejudice, the whole project of revolutionizing our Church government, will arrive at this conclusion—namely, that the whole scheme is impracticable; and to attempt it, would inevitably destroy our itinerant ministry, weaken the connexion which now subsists between the several annual conferences, and ultimately produce a dismemberment of the Church.

We submit this appeal to the Methodists, with confidence that it will be read with attention and considered with care, on account of the importance of the subject. We delayed writing for a long time, with the hope that some person more competent, and who had more leisure, would have performed the task: in this we were disappointed; and nothing remained but to do our duty as well as we could. If our arguments are solid, they will not fail of effect on account of the imperfect manner in which they are exhibited—"for truth needs no ornament; all she borrows from the pencil is deformity." We should have avoided decoration and ornament even if it had offered: we "designed plain truth for plain people."

We will add what, we are sure, will give satisfaction to the lovers of peace on both sides, whatever may be their opinions of all the rest of our book—namely, that when our local brethren among the reformers shall abate somewhat of their pretensions, and the lay reformers shall be satisfied with a representation based on the broad ground of expediency *alone*, without any reference to abstract principles, we have *terms of pacification* to propose, on which we think all parties may safely meet and happily unite. These terms, however, are, as yet, our own, having never communicated our views to any member or minister of the Church of either party: and while the reformers continue in their present temper it will probably be useless to propose anything which does not quadrate with their "visionary theories." It must not be inferred that we think *any sort* of lay or local representation necessary. If we propose anything, it will be only for the sake of PEACE.

A NARRATIVE AND DEFENCE  
OF  
THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN  
BALTIMORE CITY STATION,  
AGAINST  
CERTAIN LOCAL PREACHERS AND LAY MEMBERS OF SAID CHURCH,  
BY  
THE PERSONS WHO PREFERRED AND SUSTAINED THE CHARGES.

Put them in mind—to speak evil of no man.—TITUS iii, 1, 2.

Speak not evil one of another, brethren.—JAMES iv, 11.

Wherefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speaking, etc.—1 PPETER ii, 1.

For individuals to do wrong in their social or Church capacity, is a GREATER CRIME than to do wrong in their individual capacity; because their official acts will be more extensive in their influence, and of course the injury will be greater.—ASA SHINN, M. R., vol. iii, p. 12.



## INTRODUCTION.

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Soon after the proceedings detailed in the following pages had commenced, "Dr. Jennings's Protest and Argument" was announced in the "American," a daily newspaper of this city, as follows:—

*"Just published, Dr. Samuel K. Jennings's Protest and Argument against the proceedings of his prosecutors in the Baltimore City Station, who have combined to prefer charges against him and others, which charges when analyzed, assert that local preachers and lay members of the Methodist Episcopal Church have no right to become members of the 'Union Society,' nor to publish the 'Mutual Rights.'"*

*"Nec spes libertatis erat, nec cura peculi.*

*October 1, 1827."*

This was certainly a novel procedure. The committee before whom he had appeared and made his protest and argument, had not decided upon his case; and from the nature, number, and length of the passages in the "Mutual Rights" referred to in the charges which had been exhibited against him, it was obvious that a speedy decision was not to be expected. To appeal to the public before the decision was had, was an open insult to the judicatory constituted under the Discipline to try the case, and to the Church which had authorized and required the measure. The Protest itself showed an evident design to enlist public feeling in his favour, and thus to intimidate the Church authorities, and to forestall the opinion of the Methodists, by making an erroneous impression as to the nature of the prosecution. It was the obvious policy of this and the numerous protests and other publica-

tions which soon followed, to induce the community to believe the members of the Baltimore Union Society were persecuted for their opinions ; that an attempt was making to deprive them of the liberty of speech and of the press ; and that the allegations against them would apply with equal force *to reformers elsewhere*. The reader will find in the following pages, that nothing of this kind was done or intended to be done by the Church ; that it was not the *liberty* of speech or of the press, but their *licentiousness*, that the Church designed to curb or to punish. But weighty considerations forbade any other measure, calculated to counteract the efforts which were so insidiously making to impose upon the community, except that of soliciting a suspension of public opinion on the subject, until it would be proper to place the whole matter fairly before them. The members of the Church who had preferred the charges, therefore published the following request, immediately under the advertisement of the Doctor's Protest, &c. ; to wit :—

“ Doctor Samuel K. Jennings having endeavoured to forestall the opinion of the Methodist public, by publishing the proceedings in his case before the decision of the committee could be known—all who feel any concern in the matter, are respectfully requested to suspend their judgment until the proceedings shall have terminated, when a plain statement of the whole affair will be published.

“ GEORGE EARNEST,  
 “ JACOB ROGERS,  
 “ ISAAC N. TOY,  
 “ SAMUEL HARDEN,  
 “ ALEXANDER YEARLEY,  
 “ JOHN BERRY,  
 “ FIELDER ISRAEL.”

“ October 3, 1827.

This was immediately followed by the following rejoinder by the doctor :—

“ Dr. Samuel K. Jennings has not ‘endeavoured to forestall the opinion of the Methodist public, by publishing the proceedings of his case before the decision of the committee could be known.’ The decision of the committee was of no importance to him. He considered the case as not coming within the

jurisdiction of the preacher in charge, and accordingly protested against the competency of the tribunal before which he was summoned to appear. He knew that the jury, that is, the committee, partook in the appointment of his seven accusers, and therefore protested against them as having prejudged his case. He viewed the prosecutions which have been set on foot in this city, as the harbingers of a general persecution of the friends of religious liberty in the Methodist Episcopal Church throughout the United States, and therefore conceived it to be his imperious duty to publish his protest against such unrighteous doings, for the information of reformers at a distance.

“The pretensions of these seven men and their coadjutors as censors of the press, if sustained, are sufficient to alarm the whole community. Dr. Jennings is not accused of any immorality, and yet he is prosecuted with the avowed intention to excommunicate him, because he, with others, has used the press, in pointing out the despotic character of the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and investigating the executive conduct of her travelling ministers, who have taken upon themselves the entire government of the Church, to the exclusion of the local ministers and the whole body of the people. When a plain statement of the whole affair shall have been given to the public, and the entire plan of this persecution shall have been developed, the disinterested part of the community will understand more fully the propriety of the course which Dr. Jennings has taken.

“*October 4, 1827.*”

A plain statement of the whole affair is now before the public, and whether “the disinterested part of the community will now see more fully the propriety of the course which Dr. Jennings and his associates” have taken, is not for us to say. Our readers will, no doubt, claim the privilege of deciding for themselves. All we ask is a patient and impartial hearing.



## NARRATIVE AND DEFENCE.

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THE undersigned, members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore city station, who, in obedience to a high sense of duty to God and to the Church, have presented and sustained charges of improper conduct against certain local preachers and lay members within the said station, think a due respect for the opinion of their brethren, here and elsewhere, requires of them a fair and candid statement of the whole procedure, together with the reasons which impelled them to so important a measure.

From the time that they announced this intention, and requested a suspension of opinion until it should be proper to fulfil it,\* they have been urged by many of their friends to hasten the publication, without awaiting the decision of the Church judicatories, before whom the cases were to be tried, or to whom an appeal would lie, if the decision should be adverse to the accused. It was alleged in support of this measure, that some of those who had been cited to trial had published their protests and defences, not only to the Church but to the world; and therefore had no claim to the delicacy which would otherwise forbid any measure tending to prejudice their cases before the tribunals who had an appellant jurisdiction in the premises. But we were restrained by the consideration, that the irregular conduct of a part, ought not to be attributed to the whole; and we could not in our publication avoid the application of our remarks to all the accused. Late measures of the Union Society, in which we believe there was a common participation, might have released us from all restraint. At a meeting called for the purpose,† they have passed

\* See the Introduction.

† In the proceedings of this meeting, as published, there is an artful endeavour to make the public believe that the meeting was composed of Methodists, *not* members of the Union Society. But if we except the females who composed a considerable proportion of the assembly, and the males who were not members of the Church at all, together with those friends of the Church authorities who went there merely to witness the proceedings, it will be found that according to the capacity of the house, as ascertained by the Union Society on a former occasion, the balance of the meeting must have been composed chiefly of the members of the Union Society, who, it is not denied, were present, and voted for the resolutions and address as published.



a set of resolutions, not only justificatory of themselves, but condemning and defaming the pastor of the church, and all who participated in the proceedings against them. Before these proceedings had resulted in any decision whatever, they have not only constituted themselves judges in their own case, but have, by summary process, tried and condemned the constituted authorities of the Church, without permitting them even to say a word in their own defence. But notwithstanding we were fully aware of the erroneous impressions which the statements so prematurely and improperly published were calculated to make, we have deemed it our duty to avoid anything which might have the least effect in prejudicing the cause of the accused with the Church judicatories to whom they might appeal. The whole proceedings having terminated, we hasten to redeem the pledge heretofore given; namely, to give, as soon as it should be proper to do so, a fair and full account of the whole matter.

It has not been, and we presume it will not be, pretended, that we were induced to take these measures from any personal hostility to the accused. We have had no misunderstanding of a personal nature with any of these brethren. On the contrary, with many of them we have been on terms of intimacy, and entertained for them the most friendly regards, cemented and endeared by Christian communion and fellowship; and we had no reason to doubt that these feelings were reciprocated. We declare, in the fear of God, we love them still, and are as willing as ever to render them any proper act of kindness and friendship: we have then a right to hope, that whatever opinion may be formed of the propriety of the measures we have taken in relation to these brethren, we shall at least obtain credit for the purity of our motives.

But it has been alleged that we acted under the influence of ministerial authority,—that we obeyed the dictum of the preacher in charge, while he himself was put in motion by “persons at a distance high in authority.” This charge has been made by Dr. Jennings in his Protest, and has been reiterated here and elsewhere. We can only meet this charge with a positive and unqualified denial. We *know* that the measures taken in relation to the accused did not originate with the preacher in charge, nor do we believe that he was even informed that such measures were in contemplation until they were resolved upon; and as to the bishops, who we suppose were intended by the “persons at a distance high in authority,” we are sure that the proceedings must have considerably progressed before they were informed of them at all. But men whose responsibilities sit so easily upon them may make what assertions they please. The fact is, that although the Union Society would persuade the public that the lay members of our Church are tyrannized over by their ministers, and are dissatisfied with the government, and that it is the cause of their lay brethren that they are so strenuously pleading, yet it is by these very

lay brethren that they have been arraigned and brought to trial, and that, too, without any itinerant suggestion or influence whatever.

Great pains have been taken to impress the public mind with the belief that the accused have been persecuted for a mere difference of *opinion* with their brethren on the subject of Church government, and that we wish and design to restrict the liberty of speech and the freedom of the press. This, however, is very far from being the fact. We regret indeed that any disagreement should exist in the Church on any subject calculated to awaken undue excitement, or to give rise to strife and contention amongst brethren who have heretofore harmonized both in sentiment and effort; but we have never wished to prevent our brethren who differed from us in opinion from fully and fairly discussing the subject of Church government in general, or of ours in particular. We are not aware that any injury would arise from such a controversy, if it were conducted with proper temper, with a strict regard to truth, and to the feelings and characters of all concerned. In these declarations we believe we speak the sentiments of our brethren generally. We have a common interest in the prosperity of the Church, and cannot be injured by any changes in our ecclesiastical economy which will promote the original design of our institutions—"the universal spread of Scripture holiness." We enjoy no secular advantages from the present order of things. The benefits we derive from our connexion with the Methodists are purely spiritual; and whatever would tend to increase these, could not fail to be as much a subject of rejoicing to us as to any of our brethren. We are prepared to follow the leadings of Providence, as the Methodists have heretofore done, and to adapt our economy to the circumstances of time and place in such a way as may be deemed best calculated to promote the glory of God and the salvation of mankind. We have no desire, therefore, to suppress inquiry or prevent discussion; and we have no reason to believe that our brethren, either of the ministry or membership, have any wish to do so. Our complaint against the members of the Union Society is not on account of their opinions on the subject of Church government, nor for the honest and candid expression of their opinions; but for the misrepresentation of the motives and conduct of our ministers, and for endeavouring to sow dissensions in the Church by inveighing against the discipline. Nor do we understand by "inveighing" the temperate expression of opinion, or calm and dispassionate argument in favour of changing any part of our discipline—but we understand it to mean "vehement railing," "abusive censure or reproach." Our opponents will allow us this definition because it is stated and contended for in the "Mutual Rights" by Mr. Shinn. (See *Mutual Rights*, vol. ii, page 142.) That the finding fault *with*, and proposing alterations *of*, our discipline are not considered as violations of our discipline is sufficiently manifested by the fact, that numer-

ous petitions were sent up to the last General Conference which did all this, yet they were nevertheless respectfully considered, and a general answer returned in a circular from the Conference.

We repeat then, that it is not for being reformers themselves, or for endeavouring to make reformers of others, nor for uttering and publishing their opinions on the subject of reform, that we complain of the members of the Baltimore Union Society; but we complain that they have employed against their brethren in the ministry, and against the discipline of the Church, the severest invectives and the most vehement railing. They have impugned the motives of our venerable bishops and our itinerant ministers with unrelenting severity; and accused them, without the shadow of proof, of conduct which would render men odious even in civil society, and how much more in the Church of God. They represent them to the world as usurpers,—as tyrants and despots, “lording it over God’s heritage,”—as exercising an arbitrary authority, which was at first “SURREPTITIOUSLY” obtained, and which has been perpetuated by printing and publishing a falsehood in the preface to our Book of Discipline, and by forbidding the people to inquire into the truth of the affair: nay, more, they are represented as holding opinions and exercising a “domination” highly dangerous to the civil liberties of the country,—as being wolves among the lambs of the flock, and wolves, too, who openly show their “teeth and claws,”—and to cap the climax, nearly one hundred of these ministers, constituting the Baltimore Annual Conference, the faithful pastors over at least thirty thousand souls, are stigmatized as “abandoned tyrants,” as performing “a laboured deed of hard-earned infamy.” From the extracts which we shall give from the “Mutual Rights,” it will be shown that all this has been said of our itinerant ministers: and for these unjust accusations, for these vehement railings, we hold the Union Society accountable; because they have been uttered and published by an editorial committee elected by the society, and who profess to act as its agents, and under its supervision and control. If there be individuals in the Union Society who disapprove of the measures which have been pursued, but who had not sufficient influence to prevent or control them, let them disavow their participation in these measures by leaving the society, and they will exonerate themselves from the blame; but while they do not disavow these measures—while they so far countenance them as to let these highly reprehensible publications go out to the world under the sanction of their name and influence—they cannot complain if they are considered as accessory to the evil which has been done, and may yet be done, by the periodical of which we complain.

Some of our friends at a distance, and some even here, have intimated a wish that the proceedings against the members of the Union Society had been deferred until after the ensuing General Conference shall have

decided on the question of reform. But from what we have now stated, it will be seen that, as it respects the accused, it is of no consequence what may be the determination of the Conference in relation to lay and local representation. It is not for advocating such a representation that we complain of the accused, but for the *means* they have employed to effect their object, if such indeed was their *only* object. Whatever else the General Conference may do, we are sure they will not acknowledge the right of professing Christians to abuse and defame one another: and if, as some expect, they should make some rule of discipline, calculated more effectually to preserve the peace of the Church, it is obvious that such a rule could not have any retrospective operation—any “*ex post facto*” application—and therefore could not be brought to bear on the circumstances under which the Church now suffers. The peace of the Church must be preserved, and the character of her members and ministers protected from unjust aspersions, whatever be the fate of the much-agitated question of reform. To do this is all that we have had in view; and to decline any responsibility which may devolve on us in doing what we conceive necessary to the accomplishment of this object, would, we believe, be a criminal dereliction of duty.

That the design of the leading members of the Union Society of Baltimore has been to sow dissension in the Church is not only inferable from what they have published, but also from the effect which these publications have had in this station. How peaceful and prosperous was the state of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore a few years ago! What love and harmony everywhere prevailed among our ministers and membership! What unanimity in our official meetings—what zeal and holy fervour in our classes, our love-feasts, our missionary societies and Sabbath schools! We loved one another as brethren of the same household and family. We rejoiced in the one hope of our calling, and united in one common effort to promote the cause of God and religion in the world. The rich contributed liberally of their substance for the support of the poor, and the strong hastened to sustain the infirmities of the weak; all seemed animated with a desire to bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. It will probably be acknowledged by all, that there never appeared to be more deep piety in the Church, manifesting itself by the works of mercy and the labours of love, than at the period of the establishment of the Union Society in Baltimore. It is true that the Wesleyan Repository had been circulated amongst us for some time previously; but its circulation was very limited, and consequently its influence was but slightly felt. The fire however was secretly kindling, and a few ambitious spirits were prepared to avail themselves of the first opportunity to fan it into a flame. Some of the most inflammatory writers for that periodical resided in and near this city, and were already heated by the

controversy, and by some private griefs, to such a degree as gave plain intimations of hostile designs against the episcopacy, if not against the itinerant system itself. Whoever will read the letters of "Martin Luther" to the senior bishop, the review of "Bangs on the Episcopacy," and "A Sincere Querist and a Member of a Class" on class-meeting as a term of membership, cannot fail to discover the buddings of that bitter fruit which has since ripened in such fatal profusion.

Just before the meeting of the General Conference of 1824, some interest existing on the subject of reform, and the opinions of brethren being very various in relation to it, a general meeting (though not official) of the male members in the city was called, for the purpose of effecting a compromise, and of uniting in a memorial to the General Conference. At this meeting a committee was appointed to draft a memorial and report to a subsequent meeting. The committee was purposely composed of brethren who were known to differ in opinion on the subject of lay and local representation, but who were generally esteemed moderate men. These brethren, acting in the spirit of compromise, reported a memorial, which, after undergoing some slight amendments, was passed, signed by the chairman and secretary,\* and laid before the Conference. The ground of compromise was, that on the one side the claim of "RIGHT" to a lay delegation should be waved, and a distinct acknowledgment made that the claim ought to rest entirely on the "expediency" of the measure; and on the other, that those who desired a lay delegation should embody in the memorial whatever they could say in favour of its "EXPEDIENCY" or probable utility. On the other subjects embraced in the memorial there appeared to be no difference of opinion.

That part of the memorial which related to representation was in the following words, to wit:—

"Under these views we have been led to turn our attention to the subject of a lay delegation to the General Conference. In presenting this subject to your consideration, we would wave all that might be urged on the natural or abstract right of the membership to this privilege. We are content to admit that all governments, whether civil or ecclesiastical, ought to be founded, not on considerations growing out of abstract rights, but on *expediency*, that being always the right government which best secures the interests of the whole community. With regard to the expediency of the measure, then, we may urge that such a delegation would bring into the Conference much information with regard to the temporal affairs of the Church, which the ministry cannot well be supposed to possess. They would feel less delicacy in originating and proposing measures for the relief of the preachers' families than the preachers themselves, as they could not be subjected thereby to the imputation of interested motives,

\* Thomas Kelso, chairman, and Thomas E. Bond, secretary.

and they would, by being distributed everywhere amongst the membership, aid by their personal exertions and influence the success of such measures, and awaken more generally than has hitherto been done, the attention of the Methodist community to the great interests of the Church.

“We are aware of the constitutional objections to this change in our economy. We know that you are clearly prohibited by the very first article of the constitution under which you act from adding to the conference any delegation not provided for in that rule; but we believe that an opinion expressed by the Conference, and approved by the episcopacy, would induce the annual conferences to make the necessary alteration in the constitution, and we submit the consideration of the whole matter to the calm and deliberate attention which we are persuaded its importance demands, and which we do not doubt it will receive, determined cheerfully and cordially to submit to your decision.”

For this memorial, as the basis of compromise, all the leading reformers, who are now members of the Union Society, voted, and most of the old-side brethren who attended the meeting. We advert to these facts to show that the brethren in Baltimore, who have not seen the necessity of the contemplated innovation upon our Church economy, so far from denying the privilege of others to petition for them, or to argue in favour of them, united with those who wished to have such changes in a memorial in which the reformers said all they wished to say in favour of their measures. It will be seen that the memorialists submitted the whole matter to the Conference, *with a promise cheerfully to abide their decision.*

During the session of Conference, however, some of the reformers, abandoning the principles of the compromise, formed themselves into a separate society, and forthwith proceeded to issue proposals for the publication of a periodical paper, to be called “The Mutual Rights.” Departing from the principles which had been agreed on, they now claimed a direct representation in the General Conference as the natural and social right of the local preachers and lay members; and the consequence which naturally followed was, that all who resisted this claim were tyrants, and despots, and monarchists, &c. This consequence was predicted at the time, and the event has fully verified the prediction, as we shall presently show by the quotations we shall make from “The Mutual Rights” itself.

The formation of the Union Society was in fact the organization of a schism, the erection of “imperium in imperio,” and forms a distinct era in the history of this controversy. But for this unfortunate step the discussion of the various projects of reform might have gone on without producing any general and injurious excitement in the Church; the arguments on each side might have been presented with calmness and been

weighed without prejudice; and truth clearly and frequently exhibited would ultimately have prevailed, whether it had decided for or against the proposed changes. The temerity of individuals who, in the prosecution of the inquiry, should have indulged any undue violence, or vented any personal spleen, would have been repressed by the rebuke of public feeling and sentiment; they would have stood alone and unsupported by party array and compact. The identity of interest, feeling, and object, which necessarily exists between our ministry and membership, would have insured success to any proposals for altering our economy which could have been shown to be necessary for the common good. But the organizing a *separate, secret* society within the pale of the Church incorporated the spirit of party in its very constitution. The members of such an association could not help feeling that they had drawn a line of separation between themselves and their brethren who differed with them in opinion; that they were in some sense adversaries; and how difficult is it for adversaries to love one another. In this associate and systematic opposition to the government of the Church, they had a right to expect their brethren would look upon their efforts to make proselytes with distrust and jealousy; that they would be opposed as a hostile party; and that under whatever plausible pretexts they had associated, they would be suspected of a real design either to overawe the government, or to prepare an extensive secession from the Church if they should fail in modelling it according to their own wishes.

We have no hesitation in saying that we believe many, nay, a large proportion, of those who have entered the Union Society of Baltimore, entered it simply with a view to effect what they believed would be a salutary reform in the government of our Church, but it was not difficult to foresee that such a society would soon come to be governed by a few master spirits who possessed other views,—men who, from superior talents and management, would acquire a covered, yet absolute ascendancy over their associates. Whatever *ambitious* projects these leaders might indulge, it could not be expected they should avow them. When accomplished, they were to appear as the result of uncontrollable necessity. If a Congregational plan of Church government was contemplated, it was not at all necessary to declaim against the *itinerant system*—nay, this might be extravagantly praised; all that was necessary to be done was to alienate the affections of the people from the *itinerant preachers*, and this could be accomplished by representing them as “tyrants and despots, lording it over God’s heritage.” Meantime the Union Society would rally under its banners all who had, or supposed they had, any cause of dissatisfaction with the discipline of the Church, or those who administered it. However various and discordant their views, all would be taught to look to the contemplated reform as a sovereign remedy for their several grievances,—

whether because all slaveholders, however circumstanced, were not expelled from the Church, or because females were not permitted to occupy our pulpits, or because they had felt the wholesome rod of discipline themselves, or because they had been offended by some bishop or itinerant preacher, or because, as local preachers, their merits had not been duly appreciated, ALL WOULD BE REFORMERS. The heterogeneous materials could be easily moulded by these leaders to suit their purposes. If the recruits were at first lukewarm they would soon imbibe the *esprit du corps*. Their zeal could not fail to be inflamed by the warm addresses which would be poured forth at their frequent meetings. Impassioned declamations on liberty and equality—the glorious news of the success of the cause which would be said to come from all quarters, in despite of the unhallowed efforts of the priesthood to prevent it, would at once elicit the joy and arouse the indignation of the hearers, and, “On brethren, on!” would become the watchword of the party.

This unhappy state of things could not fail to be aggravated by the conflict of personal controversy. The brethren no longer *consulted* one another upon the subject of reform as having one common interest in the question—they *debated* and *contended* as opposite parties, each determined on victory. The bond of mutual confidence and brotherly love was broken, and the unhappy consequences began to be felt, not only in our religious meetings, but in families, carrying strife and discord even to the family altar. We will not say that none but the members of the Union Society acted or spoke indiscreetly in this state of excitement; *they* were obviously the aggressors, but some of the other side might, and probably did, indulge too much temper and speak unadvisedly. A general disposition to forbear, however, prevailed among the friends of the Church, and a manifest reluctance existed to use any means of defence but those of expostulation and entreaty. The leaders of the Union Society, on the contrary, emboldened by the impunity with which they were permitted to go on, ventured at length upon measures which exhausted all forbearance, and cut off the last, lingering, fondly-cherished hope of reconciliation.

During the session of the annual conference in this city in April last, the Rev. D. B. Dorsey was accused of recommending and circulating the “Mutual Rights,” which the conference thought an “improper periodical work,” from the temper and spirit in which it was conducted. In the course of his trial he made such declarations, and avowed such principles, as induced the conference to request the bishop to leave him without an appointment for one year. It was known, in fact, that his health did not justify his taking an appointment, and that he would have been compelled to take a superannuated relation had no allegations been preferred against him. It was thought, therefore, that the measure resorted to was the mildest by which the conference could express its disapproba-



tion, as it did not affect him in a pecuniary point of view. From the decision of the annual conference Mr. Dorsey took an appeal to the General Conference, and here the matter ought to have been permitted to rest,—at least until the final decision was had on the appeal. Soon after the recess of the conference, however, the appellant sent a statement of the case to the editors of the “Mutual Rights,” and this statement was in part sustained by the communications of *two anonymous writers*. On this *ex parte* testimony, the Union Society held a meeting, and passed resolutions, which they published in the newspapers, in which the conduct of the conference was condemned and denounced in very severe terms.

Two of these resolutions were in these words ; namely :—

“Therefore, *Resolved*, first, That the conduct of the late Baltimore Annual Conference, in the case of the Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey, was OPPRESSIVE in its character, and not warranted by the *Scriptures*, nor the Discipline of the Church.

“*Resolved*, secondly, That in the opinion of this society, the conference in thus oppressing Mr. Dorsey, has evinced a determination not only to withhold representation from the membership and local ministry, but also to keep them in ignorance of the true principles of Church government.”

We do not think it necessary here to enter into the vindication of the Baltimore Annual Conference—that has been already done ; but we do not hesitate to say, that the history of no modern Church furnishes a parallel to this outrage on all the social obligations which grow out of Church membership : nearly one hundred ministers of the gospel,—many of them venerable for their age, and all beloved for their usefulness and piety,—the laborious pastors over at least thirty thousand souls, are tried, and condemned, and denounced in the public newspapers, by a self-created society, and at the time, too, a part of the pastoral charge of these very ministers ; and that, too, without giving them the privilege accorded to the worst criminals—of coming into court, pleading to the indictment, examining the evidences, and of making their defence. And all this, too, when the person complaining had cited them before a higher tribunal, and one of whose competency neither party had ever intimated any doubt ! Something like this we have seen and deplored in political electioneering—but never before, and we trust in God never shall again, in a religious society. Whatever sympathy the Union Society expressed for their MARTYR Mr. Dorsey, it could be easily perceived that they greatly rejoiced in the occurrence. The cry of persecution was worth a thousand specious arguments, if they could but make out a plausible pretext for the complaint : and it must be acknowledged they made the most of appearances. They wrote, and published, and circulated, their highly-coloured statements, with an industry worthy of a better cause ; and as no timely effort was made to counteract them, a very extensive ferment was produced by their

statements. Meanwhile the "Mutual Rights" teemed with invective and abuse against the denounced ministry. The Rev. N. Snethen, in an address to reformers, tells them they are "lambs among wolves." These itinerant preachers, says he, "have all the teeth and all the claws, and therefore every man may be made to fear." The advice of our Saviour to his followers, to be "wise as serpents and harmless as doves," is perverted into an exhortation to employ the wisdom of "THE SERPENT." In short, the world are advertised that our itinerant ministry are wolves, and that they no longer deem it necessary to appear in sheep's clothing, but intend to carry their point by "teeth and claws." If he is believed, in vain will these ministers of Christ go into the hedges and highways to bring sinners to repentance,—who would believe their report, or who would attend their ministry? And who would supply their place? Why, Mr. Snethen and his reforming brethren among the local preachers, to be sure.

Outrageous as was this address, it was destined to be outdone and thrown into the shade, by a writer under the signature of "Vindex," whose communication appeared in the "Mutual Rights" the May following. This reckless assailant transcends all decency of invective. The decision of the Baltimore Conference in relation to Mr. Dorsey, is denounced as "*an overbearing act of an abandoned TYRANNY*;" "*a laboured deed of HARD-EARNED INFAMY*!" And the conference was stigmatized with the odious appellation of a "star-chamber court."

About this time, or a little before, the "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy, by Alexander M'Caine," made its appearance, in which our present ecclesiastical government was represented as surreptitious—a fraud practised on the membership by the bishops and travelling preachers—imposed upon them in the name of Mr. Wesley, without his sanction, and even contrary to his express commands! And it is more than intimated that this surreptitious government was supported by the suppression of documents, garbling of statements, the forgery of dates, and falsifying of records! All these allegations were known to be unfounded; and they have since been clearly disproved by Dr. Emory in his able "Defence of our Fathers." What added greatly to the indignation with which Mr. M'Caine's work was read by the friends of the Church, was, that it was written by a minister of long standing among us, who had been raised to distinction by the connexion, who was a file-leader in the Union Society, and who stated in his preface, that "*the result of his investigation was read before the Union Society of reformers in Baltimore; and the writer was requested to print it for the information of his brethren.*" This declaration was corroborated by the fact, that many members of the Union Society circulated the work with the utmost industry, that they had contributed largely to aid the publication, and rejoiced over it as a lever which was to overturn the whole superstructure of our Church polity. The

Union Society was thus identified with Mr. M'Caine in the publishing and circulating of his pamphlet. And although they have since denied (and Mr. M'Caine has concurred in the denial) that they ever took a vote on the subject, yet the co-partnership in the whole business cannot be doubted.\* We may add, that most of the unfounded allegations made against Mr. Asbury, Dr. Coke, and the travelling preachers who composed the Conference of 1784, in Mr. M'Caine's pamphlet, are reiterated in the *Mutual Rights*. It was evident now to the most incredulous that these measures could not be the work of reformers, but of revolutionists,—their object could not be to amend, but to destroy; and there were combined in this effort men, and means, and a recklessness of consequences, which, threatening the existing institutions of the Church with destruction, afforded no hope that any permanent and well-ordered superstructure would ever be erected on the ruins.

All hope of returning peace was now cut off, and those who had all along discouraged the enforcement of discipline on the offenders, lest it should afford them the plea of persecution with which to enlist the feelings of the community, began reluctantly to yield to the absolute necessity of the measure. In fact human patience, even the meekness of Christianity, could endure no more. They saw their beloved pastors and ministers, through whose instrumentality they had been brought *to*, or preserved *in*, the hope of the gospel, and who had encountered and endured all sorts of privations in their laborious and unremitting efforts to bring others to the enjoyment of the *unsearchable riches*, held up to the scorn of the world, their characters assailed and their usefulness hindered, by those whose duty it was to protect and sustain them, while the enemies of godliness were rejoicing as those who had taken great spoil. Even Christians of other denominations began to inquire whether the Methodists had no discipline, by which such improprieties could be punished and the reproach rolled away.

\* The circumstances as they occurred in the Union Society, when Mr. M'Caine read his manuscript, were thus detailed afterwards by a prominent member. "Dr. Jennings made a motion, that the society print the work at its own expense. This motion was seconded by Rev. Daniel E. Reese, and was likely to prevail, when a layman observed, that there could be no doubt that all who should be concerned in the publication, would be liable to be expelled from the Church; that although he approved the work, and would subscribe for it, yet if he were on a committee to try the publishers of it under a charge of violating the Discipline, he should, as an honest man, be obliged to find them guilty. The local preachers, he said, might be, and no doubt would be, protected by the district conference; but the laymen would have to go before the quarterly-meeting conference, and would certainly be expelled: he was therefore opposed to the motion. The motion was withdrawn, or at least not acted upon," The lay member's opinion with respect to what the district conference would do in the case, was probably predicated on the fact, that the local preachers who were members of the Union Society in Baltimore, usually constituted a majority of the district conference; few members of that body finding it convenient, or being disposed to attend its meetings.

In this state of things, a meeting of a considerable number of the male members of the Church took place, in consequence of the invitation of one or two brethren, *exclusively* with a view to the publication of a statement of facts in relation to the case of Mr. Dorsey, and a defence of the conference. After some discussion, it was determined to appoint a committee to take the subject into consideration, and to report to a subsequent meeting, to be called by notice given in all our churches in both stations on the following Sabbath. The business of the meeting being accomplished, it was about to break up, when it was suggested, that, inasmuch as great discontent prevailed in the Church, on account of the impunity with which the Union Society were permitted to publish their unfounded accusations and illiberal remarks in reference to their brethren, it was necessary that some measures should be taken to remedy the evil; and after some desultory conversation it was agreed that the undersigned should inquire into the matter, and take such measures as they should, after mature deliberation and inquiry, deem necessary.

After a careful examination of the periodical and the pamphlet complained of, the undersigned were unanimously of opinion that they contained such unjust statements and cruel imputations, that their authors and publishers ought to be dealt with according to our Discipline; and they determined forthwith to visit the members of the Union Society, to admonish them of their error, and expostulate with them on the evil which their publications had already produced in the Church—the dissensions, strife, and contentions which they had so obviously effected, and would necessarily diffuse and aggravate if persisted in. Therefore, preparatory to such a course, we made an effort to obtain the names of the members of the Union Society, by addressing the following note to Mr. John Chappell, president of the Society:—

BALTIMORE, *August 17, 1827.*

The undersigned, believing that the members of the Baltimore Union Society have violated the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and being desirous to have a friendly interview with them previous to instituting charges against them, if necessary, therefore we respectfully request to be furnished with the names of the members of the said Union Society.

GEORGE EARNEST,  
JACOB ROGERS,  
ISAAC N. TOY,  
SAMUEL HARDEN,  
ALEXANDER YEARLEY,  
JOHN BERRY,  
FIELDER ISRAEL,

} *Members of the Methodist  
Episcopal Church.*

TO MR. JOHN CHAPPELL,  
*President of the Baltimore Union Society.*

To which the following reply was given:—

BALTIMORE, *August 21st*, 1827.

DEAR BRETHREN,—Waving for the present any objections that may lie against the authority under which you act, I have to inform you that the next meeting of the Baltimore Union Society will be held on the first Tuesday in September, at which time your communication requesting “to be furnished with the names of the members of said Union Society” shall be laid before them, immediately after which meeting I will inform you of the result. In the meantime I remain, yours respectfully,

JOHN CHAPPELL.

To Messrs. George Earnest, Jacob Rogers, Isaac  
N. Toy, Samuel Harden, Alexander Yearley,  
John Berry, Fielder Israel. }

And subsequently we received the following communication and resolution of the Union Society on the subject:—

*September 5th*, 1827.

DEAR BRETHREN,—The following preamble and resolution, passed by the Union Society, is respectfully submitted. Yours, &c.

JOHN CHAPPELL.

UNION SOCIETY, BALTIMORE, *September 4*, 1827.

“Whereas brothers George Earnest, Jacob Rogers, Isaac N. Toy, Samuel Harden, Alexander Yearley, John Berry, and Fielder Israel, have requested, by a note addressed to the president of the Union Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the names of the members of the said society; and have stated, as a reason for said application, their belief that the members aforesaid ‘have violated the Discipline,’ and have intimated a design to ‘institute charges against them, if necessary:’ therefore,

“*Resolved*, That the president be instructed to request those brethren to state particularly what part of the Discipline they believe those members have violated, and in what particular instance or instances.

“We believe those brethren owe us the above information in virtue of the attitude which they have voluntarily assumed in relation to this society, and also that it is needful to our acting understandingly on their application.”

Having failed to obtain the names, we commenced visiting such of the members as were known to us. Two of the brethren waited upon the Rev. Dr. S. K. Jennings. They report their interview with the doctor to have lasted about two hours. They were received with politeness, and the

conversation which ensued was conducted on both sides with perfectly good temper, and with a good degree of Christian feeling. The two brethren chiefly adverted to the effects which had been produced by the measures pursued by the Union Society in Baltimore; the injury which the Church had sustained by the inflammatory publications in the "Mutual Rights" and the public papers; the unfounded allegations against our ministers, and the abusive epithets which had been applied to them. They adverted also to the "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy," by Mr. M'Caine, a work which had been read in manuscript before the Union Society, and which, they understood, was approved and recommended by the members of that society. They called the doctor's attention to former times, when he had been so useful, and when the Church enjoyed so much peace and concord, when he had so happily contributed to build us up in the faith of the gospel, and when we were kept in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace. They contrasted our former peaceful and happy state with the present agitated and divided condition of the Church, now that party spirit and party feelings had entered even into families, and set husband and wife, parents and children, at variance. They urged the doctor to take the necessary steps to restore harmony, love, and peace to our afflicted Zion; and tracing all the evils which the Church now suffered to the Union Society, and the improper publications which had emanated from that source, they represented the necessity of his using his influence to procure a dissolution of the association, or of his withdrawing from it, and of ceasing to publish any work characterized by the violent spirit in which the "Mutual Rights" had been heretofore conducted. The brethren stated explicitly that they did not wish or require the doctor to make a sacrifice of conscience or of principle—he could still be, and avow himself a reformer, and could speak, write, and petition, in a temperate and Christian-like manner in favour of reform, and yet retain the love and confidence of his brethren; and, what was of still more consequence, return to his former usefulness in the Church,—but, inasmuch as the Union Society and "Mutual Rights" had become so completely identified with the evils of which they complained, they deemed it indispensable that he should dissolve his connexion with them.

On the part of the doctor it was admitted that there were some expressions in the "Mutual Rights" which were severe, and of which he disapproved; but yet the sentiments were true, and that the Union Society intended to proceed in their usual way regardless of consequences. They would not be deterred from their course by the prosecutions which he understood were intended. As to the "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy," he said it was not published by the Union Society, nor upon their responsibility; but he thought the publication of it at this time rather a fortunate circumstance, as an opportunity was thereby afforded

to the Church to rebut the charges by proper evidence, *if it could be done*, before the time should pass in which the evidence could be collected. He talked much of the liberty of speech and of the press, and of their rights being guaranteed by the constitution of the United States and those of the individual States; complained of the neglect and silence with which the Church had treated their opinions and arguments; and as to what we required of him, he considered it an attack on his natural and religious rights, and if we proceeded in the prosecution he would appeal to heaven and earth against the glaring injustice. The brethren informed the doctor that they did not wish to infringe his rights, but that it could not be his right to sow dissensions in the Church by publishing such statements as were to be found in the periodical of which they complained; nor could it be anybody's right to defame and abuse others, as our ministry and even our venerable fathers who slept in Jesus had been defamed and abused in the "Mutual Rights." They stated how impossible it was for most of those who would read that work to have access to the necessary information to enable them to form a correct judgment on the cruel allegations which had been made, and how readily the enemies of our Church, and of godliness in general, would believe them without any examination at all. But nothing could move the doctor, or induce him to yield anything of the right he claimed to publish whatever he deemed necessary to the cause of reform. The interview however terminated as it began, in the most friendly manner—and it was with feelings of surprise as well as mortification that they heard the doctor, at his subsequent trial before the committee, speak of their attentions to him as "a pretended godly visit." It was sincerely intended, and, as they thought, sincerely received, as a visit enjoined by our obligations as Christians to a Christian minister; and although their object in making it was not effected, they had, and still have, the unspeakable consolation of having discharged, to the best of their ability, a Christian duty to a misguided and erring brother.\*

Some of us visited other members of the Union Society; but, with a few exceptions, were not received with the urbanity and kindness which characterized the conduct of Dr. Jennings. The Rev. J. R. Williams grossly insulted one of us in his own house. Mr. M'Caine sent us word not to visit him, as he should take it as an insult, and should probably insult us; and finally the president of the Union Society informed us that it was useless to visit the members, as they had determined not to yield

\* The brethren complained of some leading reformers, who contend, in opposition to the Discipline, that we ought not to make class-meetings a condition of Church membership. The doctor replied that he did hold it to be wrong to make class-meetings a test of membership in the Church, and that the New Testament was his discipline. They replied it was lamentable to contemplate the state of disunion in the Church which that principle would lead to.

or make any concessions. We have since learned that a meeting of the society was called on the occasion, and after some warm addresses, a pledge was given, by the holding up of hands, to stand by each other and to abide the consequences together.

Thus circumstanced, nothing remained but to lay our complaints before the Church, and accordingly the following charges and specifications were handed to the preacher in charge against eleven local preachers, to wit:—Rev. Dr. S. K. Jennings, Alexander M'Caine, John C. French, James R. Williams, Daniel E. Reese, John Valiant, William Kesley, Thomas M'Cormick, Luther J. Cox, John S. Reese, and Reuben T. Boyd; and twenty-five lay members, to wit:—Messrs. John Chappell, John Kennard, John J. Harrod, Thomas Mummey, Ebenezer Strahan, Arthur Emmerson, Lambert Thomas, Thomas Patterson, Levi R. Reese, John Hawkins, John P. Howard, Wesley Starr, John P. Paul, Joseph R. Foreman, William K. Boyle, Samuel Jarrett, Thomas Jarrett, Samuel Guest, George B. Northerman, Samuel Krebs, Samuel Thompson, Thomas Parsons, John Coates, John Stinchcomb, and Jessee Comegys.

“—— is charged with endeavouring to sow dissensions in the society or Church in this station or city, known by the name of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and with the violation of that general rule of the Discipline of the said Church or society which prohibits its members from doing harm, and requires them to avoid evil of every kind; and especially with violating that clause of said general rule which prohibits speaking evil of ministers.

“*Specification I.* Because the said ——, while a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, did heretofore attach himself to, and become a member of, the society called ‘The Union Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the city of Baltimore,’—which Union Society is in opposition to the Discipline, in whole or in part, of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid.

“*Specification II.* Because the said ——, as a member of the said Union Society, is directly or indirectly, either by pecuniary contributions or his personal influence, aiding, abetting, co-operating, or assisting in the publication or circulation of a work called ‘The Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church,’ printed under the direction of an editorial committee, appointed by, or who are members of, the Union Society aforesaid,—which work or publication, called ‘The Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church,’ contains (among other things) much that inveighs against the Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, in whole or in part, and is in direct opposition thereto; and that it is abusive, or speaks evil of a part, if not most, of the ministers of that Church,—



the general tendency of which work or publication has been to produce, and continues to produce, disagreement, strife, contention, and breach of union among the members of said Church in this city or station.

"*Specification* III. Because the said ———, as a member of the Union Society aforesaid, did advise, request, or recommend the publication of a pamphlet, entitled, 'The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy,' written by the Rev. Alexander M'Caine, in which various declarations and assertions are made, without proper proof or just foundation, calculated to disgrace and bring reproach upon the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, its ministers and members; and which declarations and assertions are well calculated to produce, increase, and heighten the disagreement, strife, contention, and breach of union alluded to in the second specification.

"For proof of which, the publication entitled 'The Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members of the Methodist Episcopal Church,' is referred to; and particularly,—

No. 1, page 31. Constitution of Union Society of Baltimore.

7, " 261. Essay on Church Property, No. 1 and 2, by Rev. N. Snethen.

25, " 26. Jos. Walker's Letter, Alabama.

27, " 53. Luther on Representation.

29, " 108. Timothy's Address to Junior Bishop.

30, " 147. Dissenter.

32, " 199. Rev. A. Shinn's Appeal.

33, " 214. Granville Union Society.

34, " 270. Vindex.

ib. Sovereignty of the Methodists in the South.

248. Address of N. Snethen.

35, " 277. Union Society on D. B. Dorsey's case.

36, " 301. Address.

308. Neale.

322. Centreville Proceedings.

"And also the said pamphlet entitled, 'The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy,'—with such other documentary or oral proof as the undersigned may deem expedient to exhibit or produce.

"GEORGE EARNEST,  
JACOB ROGERS,  
ISAAC N. TOY,  
SAMUEL HARDEN,  
ALEXANDER YEARLEY,  
JOHN BERRY,  
FIELDER ISRAEL."

"BALTIMORE, September 7, 1827."

The preacher in charge caused each of the persons accused to be furnished with a copy of the charges and specifications, as above, and notified them of the time appointed for their trials severally. The committee appointed to examine the cases of the local preachers (except Mr. M'Caine's case) were the Rev. John W. Harris, Samuel Williams, and Thomas Bassford.

The committee on Mr. M'Caine's case were taken two from the country and one from the East Baltimore station, to wit:—Rev. Samuel Gore, Nicholas Harden, and Edward Hall.

The committee appointed to try the lay members were brethren Baltzer Schaeffer, Thomas Kelso, Alexander Russell, Thomas Armstrong, John W. Berry, and William M'Conkey, Jun.

After these charges had been laid before the preacher in charge of the station, Dr. Bond, who had not yet relinquished the hope that some conciliatory course might be devised, by which the necessity of further proceedings before the constituted authorities of the Church might be removed, and who had not heretofore taken any part in the measures which had been adopted in reference to the accused, ventured alone and without our knowledge upon the business of negotiation. Having a particular intimacy with the Rev. J. S. Reese, and reposing great confidence in his understanding, piety, and prudence, the doctor communicated his intentions to him. Mr. Reese met the offer with readiness, and promised to be the bearer of any proposals the doctor might be disposed to make to the Union Society. Accordingly the following proposals were sent; to wit:—

“ September 15, 1827.

“Whereas, the Union Society of reformers have assigned as their motive in forming the association, the attainment of unanimity in their intended memorial or petition to the next General Conference; and whereas that object is expected to be accomplished by the General Convention of reformers which is to take place in November next, I am disposed to use my personal influence to procure (so far as that small influence may extend) a suspension of proceedings before the Church, upon the following conditions; to wit:—

“*First.* When the convention shall have terminated its session, the Union Society shall be dissolved, and not re-organized, in the present or any other form, until after the next General Conference.

“*Secondly.* That the periodical called the ‘Mutual Rights,’ if continued at all, shall be strictly confined (so far as relates to the controversy with respect to our Church government) to dispassionate, temperate discussion; and that no allusions to individuals or attribution of improper motives to any individuals or to the rulers of the Church, shall at any time hereafter appear in that periodical.

"To secure the fulfilment of the last condition, each number of that work, in the proof-sheets or the materials before they are printed, shall be submitted to three persons *chosen mutually* by the reformers and the committee who have preferred charges against some of them, who shall be authorized to expunge all objectionable passages therefrom.

"In making this proposition I wish it to be distinctly understood that I act alone and as a mediator, and that I have not consulted with any of the old-side brethren on the subject, nor with any reformer except brother John S. Reese.

THOS. E. BOND.

*To Rev. J. S. Reese.*

The Rev. Mr. Reese returned the above proposals, stating that the paper had been read in the Union Society, but that no order had been taken upon it; nor was he authorized in any way to continue the negotiation. It is needless to add that the doctor relinquished his hopes and did not again tender his mediation. We have heard it objected to the above proposals, that they were not official, but the mere propositions of an individual, and therefore could not be received by the Union Society. But it must be obvious that in this stage of the business no official propositions could be made by the Church authorities, because it had not been officially determined that any offence had been committed, much less had the nature of the offence and the satisfaction due to the Church been ascertained: any compromise then which could take place must be between the accusers and the accused; and between these the doctor proposed to become the mediator.

If the terms were objectionable, they might have been modified had the negotiation continued. They were obviously only propositions of compromise, and might have been properly met by propositions from those to whom they were offered, and ultimately the negotiation might have terminated in a way mutually acceptable.

But the fact is, the proposition was received as the effect of intimidation; it was thought, by the leading members of the Union Society, that the measures already taken were not intended to be followed up. The Church authorities it was believed would not dare to proceed to extremities; and if we are not misinformed, the doctor's proposals were styled in the Union Society "a flag of truce," and treated with the utmost contempt and derision. Meantime the proceedings against the accused went on. Some of those who had been cited to trial refused to appear. Of those who did appear, a few only condescended to make any defence. The rest contented themselves with technical objections to the proceedings, to the committees who were appointed to try them, and to the preacher in charge, who had cited them to trial and who presided during the proceedings.

After having patiently heard all that the accused chose to say or read

in their defence; and after a long and minute investigation of the periodical and pamphlet, which were adduced in evidence on the part of those who had preferred the charges, the committees came unanimously to the following decisions, to wit:—

In the cases of the laymen. “That the charges, together with the first and second specifications, were sustained.” The third specification was not sustained. To support the third specification those who preferred the charges had relied entirely upon the declaration heretofore quoted from the preface of Mr. M’Caine’s “History and Mystery,” namely, that “*the result of his investigation was read before the Union Society of Reformers in Baltimore; and the writer was requested to print it for the information of his brethren.*” The accused having denied that the Union Society had ever officially made such a request, and Mr. M’Caine himself declaring that he did not mean to convey that idea, the committees very properly found that the third specification was not sustained. The charges and specifications against the local preachers being the same as those against the lay members, (except in the case of A. M’Caine,) and the evidence in support of the allegations being also the same, the committee on their cases gave the same verdict, with this addition, in pursuance of the requirements of the Discipline, “that they be suspended until the meeting of the next district conference.”

In the case of Mr. M’Caine, the charges, together with the first and second specification, were the same as in the other cases: the third specification was in the following words:—

“*Specification III.* Because the said Alexander M’Caine, as the author of a book or pamphlet entitled, ‘The History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy,’ has therein made, without proper proof or just foundation, various declarations and assertions calculated to disgrace and bring reproach upon the Methodist Episcopal Church aforesaid, its ministers and members; and which declarations and assertions are well calculated to produce, increase, and heighten the disagreement, strife, contention, and breach of union alluded to in the second specification.”

The committee found that the charges and specifications were all sustained, and suspended him according to Discipline, until the meeting of the ensuing district conference.

One of the laymen who had been charged (brother Coates) was acquitted; and brothers Comegys and Stinchcomb appearing agreeably to notification, and those who preferred the charges not attending, claimed to be discharged, and their plea was admitted. It appears that there had been some misunderstanding as to the time of trial, on the part of those preferring the charges. For this, however, the Rev. Mr. Hanson thought the accused were no way answerable, and accordingly dismissed the charges.

None of the lay members availed themselves of their privilege of appeal to the quarterly-meeting conference, and of course they were expelled. Previously to their expulsion, however, the preacher in charge addressed to each of them a note, proposing terms on which they might yet retain their membership. The district (or local preachers') conference having refused to hold their regular session, the cases of the suspended local preachers, according to the express provisions of the Discipline, came up before the succeeding quarterly-meeting conference of the Baltimore city station. The suspended preachers had previously sent to the president of the conference their protest, both against the dissolution of the district conference, and the competency of any tribunal short of the General Conference to take cognizance of their cases; which protest was read. The president having announced, officially, that the district conference, according to the record of its proceedings, was dissolved, the quarterly-meeting conference, after the ordinary business had been done, took the cases of the suspended preachers up in order.

At this period of the proceedings, the following incident occurred:—A communication to the conference, from Doctor John C. Green, of Virginia, was handed to the president by the secretary, and ordered to be read. In this communication Dr. Green informed the conference, that he came to Baltimore for the purpose of mediating a reconciliation between the Church and the accused members and ministers. He transmitted to the conference certain letters which had passed between himself and Dr. Jennings on the subject, and asked a suspension of proceedings for twenty-four hours. The best feelings pervaded the conference on this interesting occasion, and a motion being made to adjourn until the next evening, it was carried without a dissenting voice. The next evening, (Thursday,) the doctor communicated no progress in the negotiation; but informed the conference that he had made a proposal to the Union Society, who were to meet the same evening, to appoint a committee to confer with a similar committee to be appointed by the conference. From a compliance with this request, the conference were prevented by insuperable difficulties. To appoint such a committee, would be to justify all that had been alleged by the accused, of the predetermination of the members to condemn them. How were the committee to know what satisfaction to require for the Church, of those whom the Church had not yet officially decided to be guilty of any offence at all? For it must be distinctly kept in view, that the committee who had previously sat on the cases now before the conference, were only a committee of inquiry. The trial of their cases could only take place before the quarterly-meeting conference. But another, and, if possible, a still greater objection to the proposal was, that the committee with whom the conference committee were intended to negotiate, were to be appointed by the Union Society, a body not recog-

nised by our Discipline, and of whom the Church could demand nothing, as many of the members of that society had not yet been brought to trial under any allegation whatever.

All that the conference could do, as a judicatory before whom the suspended preachers were ruled for trial, was done. It adjourned its session from day to day, in order to afford an opportunity to those lay members who might yet wish to appeal, and for the suspended preachers, to place their cases before the conference under the most favourable circumstances. If they believed themselves in any degree culpable, or if Dr. Green, the mediator, should be of the opinion, and should be able to convince them that they owed any satisfaction or atonement to the Church, they would of course act accordingly; and the conference thought it a duty to afford time for the adjustment. The several adjournments were,—from Wednesday until Thursday, then until Friday, and lastly until Monday, when the doctor informed the conference that the negotiation had been broken off, by the Union Society declining to hold further communication with him upon the subject. It is proper to mention that the doctor stated frequently, while in town, that he had left home and undertaken the negotiation without any solicitation from any person in this city,—and we believe that no person here knew of his intention until he avowed it himself after his arrival. To have failed in his laudable design, is no doubt a source of painful regret; but he ought to be consoled with a consciousness of having done his best, and in the best way, and perhaps as much as any man could have done under like circumstances: we are sorry we had it not in our power to congratulate him on the success of his pious endeavours, but we can and do tender him our thanks, our love, and our esteem.

The conference, after the failure of the negotiation had been announced, proceeded with the trials severally, and such was the effect produced by the reading of the passages from the "Mutual Rights," on which the charges rested, that although much difference of opinion was known to have previously existed among the members in reference to the cases before them, yet there was no dissenting vote on the motion to expel. It ought to be observed that most of the suspended local preachers did not attend, and those who were present declined making any defence, nor did any of them take an appeal to the annual conference; so that the decision was final.

It is now ascertained that a great proportion of the conference, so far from having made up their opinion before the trial, as has been so often alleged, had not even read the "Mutual Rights" at all, and therefore could not have made up a premature verdict. We are aware that it has been intimated that the conference, consisting of more than one hundred men, were the mere tools of the preacher in charge. If any can believe this

slander we shall not attempt to disturb their credulity. We should think the conference degraded by any defence against this vile and unfounded insinuation.

The final resolutions of the conference, in the cases severally, (except Mr. M'Caine's,) were as follows:—

*“Resolved, 1st.* That the charges against ———, with the first and second specifications, are sustained.

*“Resolved, 2d.* That the third specification is not sustained.

*“Resolved, 3d.* That ——— be expelled the Methodist Episcopal Church, unless he withdraw forthwith from the Union Society, and promise not to be engaged hereafter in any publications that inveigh against our discipline or government, or speak evil of ministers—and signify his intention so to do before the final adjournment of this conference.”

The above conditions were not complied with, nor any other satisfaction offered.

In Mr. M'Caine's case the decision was the same as in the others, except that the third specification was sustained, and that no conditions were appended to the vote of expulsion.

We will now make a few remarks on the objections which were made to the committees of trial and to the proceedings had in the premises, after which we shall give the extracts from the periodical called “Mutual Rights,” upon which the charges have been sustained, and close with a few observations on the whole matter.

The protests and objections so confidently made and so pertinaciously insisted on against the committees appointed to try the cases severally of the local preachers and the lay members, chiefly rested on the want of conformity in the appointment, and in the proceedings generally, to the practice which obtains in courts of criminal jurisprudence. We may therefore entertain the hope that when these great reformers shall have remodelled the Church “after their fashion,” we shall, among other promised blessings, “enjoy all the glorious uncertainties of the law.” We shall then substitute our little Book of Discipline by massy folios of common law, and statute law, with commentaries of learned length, and reports of ponderous magnitude. We shall have a goodly number of ecclesiastical lawyers, establish courts, appoint judges, with their attending clerks and other officers, who will keep us to all the rules of special pleading and legal technicalities. We may then enjoy the inestimable privilege of occasionally defeating the ends of justice by a technical objection to an indictment, and see persons take their places in our class-meetings, and at the communion, whom everybody knows to be guilty of the worst offences, but who have eluded a fair trial by the subtlety of counsel. What a wonderful reformation we have in prospect, and how ardently ought it to be desired by all good Methodists!

We have heretofore considered our Church judicatories as merely moral tribunals, in which a few plain, pious men, were deemed capable of deciding whether an accused brother had violated his religious or social obligations, as ascertained and pointed out by the Bible and our Discipline; how one found to have so offended could be reclaimed from the error of his ways; or the effects of evil example prevented, and the reproach rolled away from the Church of Christ. We had never thought that there was any great difficulty in such an investigation, or that the rules by which such an inquiry was to be conducted could be, in their nature, very obscure or complicated. The Methodists had heretofore been led to think that men of plain common sense, with the necessary piety and integrity, were fully competent to judge in such matters both of the *law* and the *fact*. But it seems that both we and our fathers have walked in great darkness. In vain we allege that we have hitherto lived happily under these regulations. This, we are told, was attributable to our ignorance; we did not know and justly estimate our privileges; all these things are now to be *reformed*.

The right to challenge jurors, it is alleged, is acknowledged in all civilized and Christian countries. We will not cavil at this sweeping declaration, although it might perhaps be shown that there are civilized and Christian countries where the trial by jury does not exist at all. We admit, however, that all civilized and Christian countries ought to adopt it as a civil institution of inestimable value: but it does not follow that precisely the same regulation ought to be, or even can be, adopted in Church government accompanied with the right to challenge jurors: and we may safely assert, that such a right, as exercised in our courts of law, does not obtain in any Church judicatory of which we ever heard. In the Protestant Episcopal Church we believe that persons deemed unworthy are forbidden the communion, at the will of the pastor alone. In the Presbyterian Church, the trial of members accused of improper conduct takes place before the "session," composed of the minister and the lay-elders, all holding their office for life or during good behaviour; and deputations from the "sessions" constitute all the superior judicatories, who exercise appellate jurisdiction in the Church. In the Baptist and Congregational Churches, trials for violation of discipline take place before the whole Church, and we believe the accused does not possess the privilege to except against any member's right to sit on his case. Surely it cannot be without good reason that the privilege of challenge, either peremptorily or for cause, accorded to persons indicted for offences against the laws of civil society, are not recognised in any Church judicatory whatever. Why it has not been, and cannot be, provided for by any such explicit regulation is indeed very obvious. It would require that there should exist, somewhere in the Church, an authority to compel the service of jurors and the



attendance of witnesses,\* and to call them from a great distance if occasion should require. But it is obvious that no Church can clothe any of its officers with such powers. We readily admit, that in selecting committees our preachers ought to set aside any man who is known to entertain or to have expressed any personal hostility to the accused member. We know of no instance where they have refused to do so; and were they to refuse, the quarterly-meeting conference, upon an appeal, would not fail to redress the injury. In the cases under consideration no such objection was made to any member of the committees for trial. The objections were—first, that the members of the committees of trial had, at a meeting held at Dr. Roszell's academy, participated in the appointment of a committee to prosecute; and, secondly, that they had voted for certain resolutions and an address at a meeting held in the Baptist church, in Pitt-street, Old Town, in which certain writers for the "Mutual Rights" and the Baltimore Union Society were called "the enemies of Methodism."

To the first we may answer, that no committee was appointed at the meeting in Dr. Roszell's academy for the purpose of preferring charges against the members of the Union Society. Certain members of the Church were requested to inquire into the causes which had produced the existing agitations in the Church in this station; but they were left without instructions and without responsibility to the meeting, as to any measures they might be led to take in consequence of the inquiry. Many, and perhaps most, of the persons at that meeting cherished the hope that the violent measures of the Union Society would be desisted from, upon proper remonstrance with the members of that association.

The second objection is more specious, and requires particular consideration. In the address complained of, no individual is named as being responsible for the publications in the "Mutual Rights"—nor is any opinion given that the writers or publishers of that work ought to be expelled from the Church. Mr. M'Caine's pamphlet indeed was alluded to, and the work as well as the motives which dictated it were spoken of in terms of very severe reprehension; but the committee appointed to try *him* were taken, two from the country and one from the East Baltimore Station, and were not at the meeting alluded to, nor in any way concerned with the address. The objection, then, is confined to the expression in the address, as applied to the Union Society—"The enemies of Methodism." Whether the voting for an address in which this was said of the Union Society disqualified the members of the committees from serving on the trials of any

\* During the trials we have been giving an account of, the tribunals, so far from having the power to compel the attendance of witnesses, appeared to have no authority to compel answers to interrogatories put to the witnesses who were present. Some of the officers and private members of the Union Society positively refused to say whether the persons under trial were members of that society or not.

member of that society, charged with inveighing or railing, and evil-speaking, will depend upon the import of the allegation itself; and we assert that, in the only proper meaning of the expression in the address, it does not imply any offence, either against good morals or our Discipline. What is Methodism? Surely it must be that which distinguishes the Methodists from other denominations of Christians. But what is it that so distinguishes us? Certainly not our doctrines, for these are none other than those of the Church of England and of the Protestant Episcopal Church. Mr. John Wesley and Mr. Fletcher, whose writings are the standard authorities of our Church, were both ministers of the Church of England, professed entire belief in her doctrines, and appealed to her articles and homilies, as well as to the Scriptures, in support of the religious tenets which they inculcated and defended. What is it then that constitutes the distinguishing appellation of "Methodism?" Plainly and obviously the peculiar ecclesiastical economy of the Methodists: and to be thought inimical to this economy, it was not supposed the Union Society would consider a reproach, because they had often avowed it; and certainly those who alleged it never intended to convey the idea that those who were opposed to the leading principles of this economy might not be good men and good Christians. With "Methodism," thus defined and as thus understood by the authors of the address, the Union Society have been finding fault for the last three years, and the leaders of it for a much longer term, and it is now rather too late to deny that they are its "enemies." That those who voted for and published the address complained of by the accused, understood the term "Methodism" as we have explained it, is obvious from the address itself, for they speak of our ecclesiastical economy as "that wholesome discipline which governed our fathers and *distinguished them as a peculiar people.*" We believe, also, that the Union Society have understood the term in the same sense, for we suppose that when they complain in the "Mutual Rights" of "the sovereignty of *Methodism* in the South," they do not intend to complain of the influence of the Methodist doctrines. It is admitted then, that those who voted for the address of the male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the Baltimore City and East Baltimore stations, have denominated the members of the Union Society of Baltimore "enemies of Methodism," that is, of the peculiar economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and they have repeatedly avowed it themselves; but in doing so the committees had not prejudged the cases of the accused on the charges now preferred against them—namely, of inveighing (i. e. railing) and evil-speaking—and hence were not disqualified to try the matter at issue between the Church and the accused. Whether the decision which these committees have given in the cases submitted to them have been just, will be left to the reader, after he shall calmly and dispassionately have read the extracts from the "Mutual

Rights," upon which those who preferred the accusations relied to sustain them. For ourselves, we have no doubt that every impartial man will, after such examination, concur in the judgment of those committees.

Extracts from the periodical called "The Mutual Rights," published by an editorial committee elected annually by the Union Society of Baltimore.

Extracts from the "Constitution of the Union Society of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the City of Baltimore."

"*Article 2.* The officers of this Society shall consist of a president, two vice-presidents, a treasurer, a secretary, a corresponding committee of three members, and an editorial committee of four ministers and four laymen, all of whom shall be elected annually by ballot."

"*Article 7.* It shall be the duty of the editorial committee to inspect all original and selected matter that may be presented for publication in the 'Mutual Rights,' and to suffer no matter to be published in that work until it shall have received the approbation of a majority of said committee; to employ a person to print the necessary number of copies of forty octavo pages each per month; to solicit subscribers and patrons for the publication; and, generally, to do all matters and things which, in their opinion, are calculated to promote the circulation and usefulness of the work."—Vol. i, pp. 20, 21.

#### REMARKS.

From the above extract it will be seen, that the editorial committee are elected annually by the Union Society, and are consequently the agents of that Society in the publication of the periodical called the "Mutual Rights." On this principle the members of the Baltimore Union Society have been held responsible for the unfounded allegations against the characters of our ministers, and the abusive epithets so liberally bestowed upon them in that work.

Extracts from "An Essay on Church Property, by the Rev. Nicholas Snethen."

"Our Church property as well as power, are, in effect, in the hands or under the control of the superintendents, and should the constitutional test obtain, will destroy all hopes of any legal or regular change for the better. This controlling or disposing power over public property in men who hold an office for life, is one of the essential principles of an absolute government, and by an extension of territory must continue to increase indefinitely. The disclaiming all right or pretension to taxation by the General Conference amounts to nothing like a check upon the power of the superintendents over property; but does in fact tend to promote it. Were it in the power of the travelling preachers by any means to secure an immediate support from the people, they might use the people's money

to control the power of the episcopacy ; but in the present state of things they can neither occupy the houses nor receive the people's voluntary contributions without an official signification of the executive will.

"All the travelling preachers are at the disposal of the superintendents, and so long as there shall be more preachers than there are places to support them, the surplus number must be dependent ; and to make this dependence universal, no preacher has any security that his lot to '*turn out*' may not come next. It avails nothing that the public property is in the keeping of trustees or stewards. If the houses cannot be taken from the preachers, the preachers may be taken from the houses. The members of the Church have in reality no Church property, and the travelling preachers have none in effect. The latter are tenants at will, and at the end of each year may be removed. Are we not virtually acting over again St. Peter's patrimony and Peter pence ? In monarchies public property is vested in the crown, and, of course, in him who wears it ; hence we hear of 'his majesty's arms and armies,' and kingdom, &c.,—of 'we, by the grace of God,'—and of 'the pope's bull,' (bull,) seal affixed to his official acts. By 'the grace of God' is meant the 'divine right,' &c."—*Ibid.*, pp. 261, 262.

"The hundred successors of Mr. Wesley who compose the British Conference, unite in themselves all the powers and functions that are exercised by our General Conference and superintendents. They are all bishops *de facto*. Our ordination conveys nothing which Mr. Wesley did not give to them. He was not a partial father, much less did he disinherit his first-born ; we congratulate our British brethren in this thing, that they have good sense enough not to run after names and shadows. There is neither divine nor human obligation binding on our General Conference to confer a life office on any man. We know to a certainty that Mr. Wesley never meant to confer any power for life upon the superintendents which he and Dr. Coke ordained, for he actually had it in contemplation to recall Mr. Asbury ; of such an event Mr. Asbury was so well aware, that he took special care to prevent it, by *getting himself elected superintendent* by the American preachers."—*Ibid.*, p. 263.

"The consequences of exclusive proprietorship in public property in the Catholic Church is well known, and has long been seriously deplored ; but it seems that we take no warning from the experience of others. We have fully set forth our determination to participate with our elder brethren in evangelizing the world. The General Conference, in their address, contemplate a meeting between the British missionaries and ours, somewhere on the eastern coast of Asia or Japan. But when Methodism shall thus have encircled the globe, *will any regard be paid by the missionaries and their senders to the mutual rights of the ministers and the people of the Methodist Episcopal Church ? No such thing.* These senior and junior

brethren will divide the Methodist Church property of the universe between them, without listening to any intimation that the accumulation of so much wealth might seem to savor of monopoly or avarice, and might possibly be made to minister to ambition.”—*Ibid.*, p. 265.

“We have said that Mr. Wesley was rich in Church property ; and that he knew and felt he was so. We say the same of our superintendents ; they too know and feel that they have a hold on the public property, in virtue of the absolute prerogatives of their office, sufficiently firm to enable them to dispossess *any* preacher whenever they may think proper. It is to no purpose to say, they cannot convert this property to their own private use. There is no reason to suppose they would do so, if they had the title in fee. Kings are not wont to use the property of the crown for their own private benefit, or in other words, to impoverish themselves as kings in order to enrich themselves as individuals. It is not to be supposed that the holders of absolute power will be less ambitious than prodigal or covetous monarchs. The glory of superintendents is proportionate to the amount of property they have in their possession. Every house that is built, and every collection that is made, adds to their consequence, by increasing their influence. *Poor bishops of rich dioceses are not common ; and poor universal bishops are much less so.* The travelling preachers also, while their imaginations are dazzled with the idea of their share in the title of property, secured by deed to the General Conference, feel rich and look down upon the poverty of local preachers ; their exclusive right to seats in the conferences, is, indeed, so flattering to their vanity, as in most instances to blind them to the actual state of things. Few of them can be brought to reflect steadily upon the fact, that they are little more than trustees for the bishops, who as soon as they are elected and inducted into office, are no longer responsible to them. The power or privilege of electing to an absolute office for life, is the most dangerous that can be vested in any body of men. The importance that such electors are prone to attach to themselves, is pleasantly ridiculed in the story of the cardinal and the pope. The cardinal, when he wanted a favour, reminded his holiness that he made him pope ; who, wearied at length with his importunity, replied, ‘ then let me be pope.’ ”—*Ibid.*, p. 285.

“Our superintendents are not only chosen members of the conferences and presidents for life, with the power of choosing the presiding elders and stationing all the preachers, but, to make them as independent as possible, they are pensioners on the book fund, to the full amount of all demands. The Discipline, by putting no check upon their power, presumes they can do no wrong. In one point of comparison it must be confessed, that the American itinerant preacher seems to have the advantage of the British ; but another view of their condition will convince any one that none of these seeming advantages can be realized. In England, travelling

preachers who have fulfilled their probation, are eligible to the vacancies in the Conference. With us they become members of the annual conference, and eligible to a seat in the General Conference, and, of course, nominal proprietors of the Church property. Here their glory ends. Innocence or neutrality gives no security to our preachers, to an equality of appointments. Every preacher, as well as the presiding elders, may become a minister to the episcopacy. Probationers may manifest greater zeal for the prerogative than men of long standing and experience. Offences must needs come, and do often come, in despite of the greatest prudence. No travelling preacher can protect himself against episcopal suspicion, or jealousy, or displeasure; and however unjustifiable a bishop's feelings may be, he may retain them through life, and perhaps transfuse them into the breasts of his colleagues. It is possible, indeed, that they cannot all be united in a proscription; but is it not infinitely more improbable, that fifty men will withhold their votes for a presidency, year after year, from every one who will not imbibe their prejudices? The chances, therefore, of being driven or persecuted out of connexion in the two systems, bear no proportion. Though a hundred men may be as true to their common interests as one or five, and a feeling of dependence must be engendered in both instances, yet it is of the utmost importance to weaken and conceal the feeling as much as possible.

"It is a maxim with some, and every four years of experience serves to confirm them in it, that if a preacher is not prepared to go all lengths in episcopal measures, he will do well to decline an election to a seat in the General Conference. More than one travelling preacher might, perhaps, feelingly repeat, in regard to Baltimore, with a member of the synod of Dort, 'O Dort, Dort! O Baltimore, Baltimore! would to God I had never seen thee!' The hero of opposition may return to his work, complacent in the consciousness of his own integrity, unawed by the fear of man; but the eye of episcopal vigilance is upon him. His health declines; the afflictions of his family, and cares and wants multiply upon him. He needs a house at hand, for he cannot move afar off; he wants medicine and bread! To which of the saints will he now turn, to which of his friends say, 'Pity me, O my friends, for the hand of God hath touched me?' What! can *he* want a house, and a home, and the means of support, who inherits all houses and property to the exclusion of local preachers and the laity? Can a member of that General Conference, to whom so many thousands have been deeded, become a houseless wanderer, a penniless stranger, among a strange people? Where now has the spirit of sympathy and fellow-feeling fled? O! where are his brethren whose turn may come next? Is there no power in this heaven and earth to save him from the dread of starvation? None. How is this? Plainly thus. When all is given away nothing remains. The General Conference have given the

bishops a life power over that very property which the donors vested in themselves. When they are made to know the worth of this property, by the want of it, at that very juncture they may be made to feel that they can enjoy no part of it. And is there no remedy? Are bishops and presiding elders all past feeling? Perhaps there is one open door left; *what executive purpose can be so inflexible as not to relent when executive measures have converted a poor and needy opponent?* O! we hope that none of these *elder brethren* will refuse to join the music and dancing when one who was lost is thus found.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 286, 287.

## REMARKS.

It is asserted in the above extracts that all our Church property belongs to the bishops; that Mr. Asbury “took especial good care to get himself elected superintendent by the American preachers; that the bishops are chosen members of the General Conference; that there is no check upon their power; that they are considered infallible, and, finally, are pensioners upon the book fund to the amount of all demands.” We defy any man to find, in the same number of lines, in any book in the world which makes any pretensions to truth, as many assertions which are as entirely destitute of foundation.

1st. Our bishops have no claim, either in law or in equity, to any Church property whatever. Their names do not appear in any deed by which property has been conveyed to the Church, either for burying grounds, meeting-houses, or parsonages. The whole body of travelling preachers, with the bishops at their head, would be legally incapable of selling or of conveying any of this property, or of converting it to any other use than that for which it was designed by those who purchased the ground or erected the houses, and for which it is held in trust by the trustees of the Church, who are always either laymen or local preachers. The right to preach in our meeting-houses is secured to the travelling preachers, but it is not in the power of the General Conference to hold or to confer on others any right of property in them.

2dly. The bishops, as such, are not members of the General Conference at all. One of the bishops presides, *ex-officio*, in the Conference, and has the casting vote in case the members should be equally divided upon any question before them. But this is the only participation they have in any legislative privilege in the Church; and this can only be enjoyed by one of them at a time.

3dly. The bishops have no authority to draw a single dollar from the book fund on their own order, whatever their necessities may be. It is true that the family expenses of the bishops are supplied from the book fund—because, as they belong to no circuit or station exclusively, they could not be supplied in any other way. But the bishops are not privileged

to be "pensioners on this fund to the amount of all demands" "in order to render them as independent as possible." On the contrary, the General Conference designates a committee of travelling preachers to fix the amount which shall be allowed for the bishops' table expenses, and the book agents cannot exceed by a single cent the amount of such allowance. So that these *independent bishops* are nevertheless dependent on the travelling preachers for bread both for themselves and their families.

4thly. It is alleged that there is no check upon the bishops' power, and therefore it must be presumed that they "can do no wrong." What will the reader think of this assertion when he learns that these bishops have no power over any other persons but the travelling preachers; that these preachers delegated this power, and can at any time restrict it or reclaim it to themselves, and even abolish the episcopal office, if they deem it expedient to do so. The General Conference never fail to appoint a committee on the episcopacy at every session, which committee, composed generally of one delegate from each annual conference, take the administration of the bishops under their consideration, and to them any complaint may be made against the episcopal administration. The bishops are not only liable to expulsion or deposition upon impeachment, but we have been again and again reminded in the "Mutual Rights" of the fact, that the Conference deposed two of their bishops or superintendents, simply by leaving their names off the Minutes. How then can it be alleged that there is "no check upon their power"—and that they are thought "incapable of doing wrong?" Their power, we have seen, is under the immediate control of those who have conferred it, and who cannot attribute infallibility where they have thought it necessary to exercise a salutary supervision, by a committee from their own body at every General Conference.

In order to show the reader the absurdity of the declaration that "the Discipline, by putting no check upon the power of the bishops, presumes they can do no wrong," we will refer him to the Discipline itself, page 26, questions 4th, 5th, and 6th—to wit:—

"*Question 4.* To whom is the bishop amenable for his conduct?

"*Answer.* To the General Conference, who have power to expel him for improper conduct, if they see it necessary.

"*Question 5.* What provision shall be made for the trial of a bishop, if he should be accused of immorality in the interval of the General Conference?

"*Answer.* If a bishop be accused of immorality, three travelling elders shall call upon him and examine him on the subject; and if the three elders verily believe that the bishop is guilty of the crime, they shall call to their aid two presiding elders, from two districts in the neighbourhood of that where the crime was committed, each of which presiding elders shall bring with him two elders or an elder and a deacon. The above-men-



tioned nine persons shall form a conference, to examine into the charge brought against the bishop; and if two-thirds of them verily believe him to be guilty of the crime laid to his charge, they shall have authority to suspend the bishop till the ensuing General Conference, and the districts shall be regulated in the mean time as is provided in the third and fifth sections: but no accusation shall be received against a bishop, except it be delivered in writing, signed by those who are to prove the crime; and a copy of the accusation shall be given to the accused bishop.

“*Question 6.* If a bishop cease from travelling at large among the people, shall he still exercise his episcopal office among us in any degree?

“*Answer.* If he cease from travelling without the consent of the General Conference, he shall not thereafter exercise the episcopal office in our Church.”

The allegation against Mr. Asbury, “*that he took special good care to get himself elected by the American preachers,*” is the “unkindest cut of all.” Mr. Asbury refused to be superintendent of the Methodist Episcopal Church unless he should be elected by the free suffrages of his brethren. And was it not praiseworthy to do so? He might have been superintendent by Mr. Wesley’s appointment, as Dr. Coke was, (though he also was received by a vote of the Conference,) but he would not exercise authority over any but those who consented to confer it upon him; and this is called “taking special good care to GET HIMSELF elected by the American preachers!” And this is said too by a man who, in the lifetime of the good bishop, was his bosom friend and travelling companion, and who, after his death, eulogized him in a funeral sermon in terms of unqualified panegyric as a “good man,” a “good minister,” and a “good bishop!” O shame, where is thy blush?

In the above quotation, the picture which the writer has drawn in the last paragraph, of the intolerant persecuting spirit of our bishops, can only find a parallel in the Romish inquisition. To starve the *healthy* dependent into submission to arbitrary power, would probably be considered sufficiently odious in a civilized, not to say Christian community; but to deprive the sick opponent of shelter and food and medicine, until he is forced into improper compliance with episcopal prerogative, is a hardihood of cruelty at which the heart sickens, and at which the soul of an ordinary inquisitor would revolt. The wretch who could be guilty of such barbarity ought to be deemed to have renounced all affinity with his species, and hunted down as the common enemy of mankind. Can any man believe that such a monster is to be found among the venerable bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church? If Mr. Snethen, or the editorial committee who publish the accusation, know the man, and the facts, why not name the one, and point directly to the other? Why these cruel innuendoes, which may be ignorantly applied to the innocent? But we defy them

to produce the least shadow of proof. We know the men who are thus mercilessly assailed; and the travelling preachers, whose suffrages have placed them in their present parental relation to the Church, know them well. Long have they laboured and suffered for the Church, and endured with patience the privations to which their vocation has subjected them. Everywhere esteemed for their works' sake, and loved for their personal virtues, the whole community will hear with indignation the allegations of these partisans, who seem to act on the principle, that the end they have in view will justify any means they may employ to effect it. The paper in the "Mutual Rights," from which we have quoted, was published in March, 1825. At the General Conference of 1820, a motion was made and carried, to restrict the episcopal prerogative in the appointment of presiding elders. The resolutions providing for this restriction were subsequently suspended for four years; and the General Conference of 1824 continued the suspension for four years longer. Now, as there were no other measures of the Conference which tended to abridge the powers heretofore exercised by the episcopacy, it must be in reference to the part which the preachers who composed these conferences took in this measure, that the bishops are accused of exercising such unrelenting cruelty to those who were opposed to their prerogative. It happened, however, that a majority of the bishops themselves favoured the restrictive resolutions, and the rest made no opposition but on constitutional grounds; and we assert, without the fear of contradiction, that no preacher has ever received less favour from the bishops on account of the part he took in relation to this question. On the contrary, we challenge a comparison of the appointments of those who favoured the restrictive resolutions with those who were opposed to them; and we pledge ourselves to show that the best appointments have been given to those who were opposed to the episcopal prerogative. What atonement, then, can the author and the publishers of this cruel accusation make to these venerable ministers of the gospel and overseers of the flock of Christ, and to the outraged feelings of the Church over which they preside, for the injury they have designed them? We leave them to answer this question at a tribunal where all our accounts will be one day finally and impartially adjusted.

It cannot be pretended that the calumny we have quoted above, is not meant to describe what has occurred, but what may be anticipated. There are in the allusions of the author, a specification of *place* and *time* and a circumstantiality of description, which necessarily point out an individuality of application both as to the oppressor and the oppressed. And the sombre picture of the stern and inflexible tyranny of the episcopacy, which nothing but humble submission can appease, is only equalled by the profligacy of those "elder brethren," those panders to power and prerogative, who are represented by the author as joining the music and

dancing over the converted starveling—the broken-hearted victim of episcopal cruelty and oppression!

It may be asked by the reader, how it was possible for the reverend author of the publication from which we have made the above extract, to be betrayed into such an indiscretion; as it will not be denied, that he had long been esteemed as an able minister and a pious, amiable man. The answer will afford a caution which ought to be treasured up by every Christian, however high his attainments. The author was endowed by nature with genius rather than with a discriminating judgment. His fine imagination delighting to indulge in the uncontrolled exercise of its powers, despised the cold lessons of common sense and experience; but the brilliancy of his fancy, combined with a ready utterance, gave irresistible charms to his eloquence, and he necessarily became a popular preacher. Such a mind is wont to revel in mighty projects and impracticable schemes; and at the moment of penning the essays we have cited from, the author was “climbing the steep and slippery ascent to revolutionary distinction.” He was not only a partisan, but the leader of a party,—and with reference to our Church government and its administration, he looked upon everything through the spectacles which party spirit had furnished him. Through this medium, every opponent and every measure of opposition is made to take the hue with which party feeling discolours them, and the author mistook for realities what were the mere visions of a disturbed and fervid imagination.

But what shall we say of those who published these ravings of a disordered fancy? who with calm deliberation laid them before the public as sober realities? Reader, are you a Christian? then shun faction as an evil influence which, if indulged, will inevitably destroy the spirit of love and of meekness, and substitute for them, malice and revenge and every evil work.

Extract from the same.

“Our bishops must be flattered, or their power must be resisted. But flattery is easier and more pleasant than resistance to oppressive power. Itinerant and local preachers, and members of the Church, therefore, will discover a proneness to flatter bishops. For the same reason, local preachers and members will feel disposed to flatter itinerant preachers. But can any reason be assigned, why the private member of the Church, should despise local preachers, or that they should manifest an indifference or aversion towards each other? Evidently, when the awe that the wealth and power of office inspires is no longer felt, or ceases to operate under the disguise of flattery, the mind experiences a re-action, and seeks to revenge itself upon the name, or form of the office, deprived of its attributes. Let the property and power which is really in our bishops, and nominally in the

itinerant preachers, be transferred to the local preachers, and the public feelings will also be transferred. The flatterer pleases himself by his flattery, while he seeks to please those whom he flatters. And this pleasure proceeds from the relief which the mind experiences from the uneasy or painful sensation of fear. Mankind are sparing of their flattery towards those of whom they have nothing to hope, and from whom they have nothing to fear. The president of the United States is not flattered as a king; but would be, if his power were as much feared. We are aware, that an intimation, that our bishops and itinerant preachers are feared by the members and the local preachers, will be repelled with great indignation. Indeed, our whole theory of feeling in this case, will be considered as visionary and erroneous. Our statement is nevertheless true, and admits of the clearest demonstration. Mr. Wesley was greatly flattered, and so was Mr. Asbury. They, indeed, mistook these expressions for the marks of love, and so did those who made them; but though it is not to be doubted that there was much sincere affection, this was to the men. Their property and power were feared; and as was the fear, so was the flattery. Some of our bishops, we perceive, will be much flattered to the south and west of the Susquehanna, and much and deservedly loved too. But it does not now seem probable, that they will receive much eulogy from the north and east. If this shall prove to be the fact, will not the limits of their praise be the limits within which their power will be feared? We beg that these remarks may be attended to, and carefully kept in mind. These are the data, on which we have predicated the separation of the north and the east, from the south and the west. Where their power is not flattered it will be resisted. This is not an unwarranted assertion; it is not a new case; it is the thing that hath already been. Leaving Mr. Wesley's name out of the minutes is a parallel instance, and may be traced to a similar cause. The absence of the man, disclosed the workings of the fear: had he been present, flattery would have concealed it all. Traces of a similar operation may be observed in Dr. Coke's visits. His power was not half so much to be dreaded as Mr. Asbury's; and yet the conference required articles to curb it, while he was in England. Of all the illusions which the human mind practises upon itself, none is more wonderful than that which takes place in the case of flattery. We always had occasion to notice, that Mr. Asbury placed his chief reliance for the ascendancy of his influence upon his presence. Where trouble was, there was he!"—*Ibid.*, pp. 288, 289.

## REMARKS.

What a disgusting picture is here drawn of Mr. Wesley, our bishops and travelling preachers!—the one catering for praise, the others fawning and cringing to power and prerogative, and flattering these tyrannical pre-

lates as though they had places and offices of immense emolument in their gift. As Mr. Snethen travelled with Mr. Asbury, he may be allowed to know better than anybody else, *what means* he himself employed to acquire the bishop's confidence and procure his favour. Whether Mr. Asbury permitted Mr. Snethen to flatter him, we cannot say; but we protest against his attributing the same disingenuous policy to the other itinerant ministers who were his contemporaries. Some of them are yet living to feel the unkind and unwarranted accusation; and of some who are dead, we say with confidence, they were made of sterner stuff than to flatter human vanity, pride or power. That they loved and honoured Mr. Asbury is indeed very true, and never were love and reverence more justly and appropriately bestowed. But the writer says: "*We always had occasion to notice, that Mr. Asbury placed his chief reliance for the ascendancy of his influence upon his presence. Where trouble was, there was he.*" And where, we would ask, *should* the shepherd be when the flock is in danger? And if any part of the flock of Christ is in "trouble," where should he be who is appointed to watch over the flock? We knew Mr. Asbury, and we speak advisedly when we say, "his chief reliance for the ascendancy of his influence" was placed in the singleness of heart with which he sought to promote the great interests of the Redeemer's kingdom upon earth—upon the purity and disinterestedness of his motives, which his brethren saw exemplified, in every action of his long and devoted life—and upon the blessing of the Great Head of the Church, to whom he could appeal for the rectitude and sincerity of his every purpose. These, together with his acknowledged ability, gave him his great ascendancy in the councils of the Church—and for the truth of this assertion, we appeal, if proof be thought necessary, to Mr. Snethen's funeral sermon on the death of this venerable servant of God. O PARTY SPIRIT! thou fell destroyer of peace and concord, love and union, do not the living furnish victims enough to make up the hecatombs which are to be offered upon thy altar—must thy votaries also scatter on the sacrifice the ashes of the dead?

Extract from "Nehemiah,"<sup>c</sup> on the expediency of allowing to the Local Ministry and Laity a Representation in the General Conference."

"Convinced as they (the reformers) are that they have everything on their side that would justify them in the sight of God, in the eyes of the world, and in the demands of their own consciences, to withdraw, is it to be expected that they will continue to submit to those who withhold their rights? To remain would be hopeless. To remain in the connexion would be to remain to be made the butt of the contumely and insult of every one opposed to reform. If nothing be done in favour of the reformation it will be construed into a total defeat, and will so inflame their

<sup>c</sup> Alexander M'Caine.

opponents as to induce them to add further injuries to the grievance already felt. What, then, can the reformers promise themselves by continuing in the connexion in the event of a total denial of their claims? Can they hope that, by continuing to suffer, justice will be done them in the end? *Alas! injustice, like death, has neither eyes to see the miseries of its subjects nor a heart to feel for the wounds which it inflicts.* Every symptom of patience, and every returning period, will only encourage their *oppressors* to be firmer in their denial, and will induce them to augment the distresses of the distressed. Can they, under this view of the subject, calculate upon the common courtesies and civilities of life? They cannot. For, even at the present, and while the cause is depending, the shafts of reproach are frequently hurled at them, even from the pulpit.

"We will now suppose that the General Conference, rigidly adhering to the present system, with all its features of injustice, reject the petitions which may be presented for a representation. We will suppose that those friendly to an equitable Church government, based upon representation, will then proceed to take such measures as will be deemed necessary to form themselves into a Church—will not many of our best and oldest local preachers be of that number? Will not many of the most intelligent and respectable laymen and their families be of the number? Will not some who are at present in the travelling connexion, and who are ground, as it were, *between the upper and nether millstones*, on account of their liberal sentiments, be of that number? We have no doubt of these things. How whole districts of country may be affected by the formation of a new connexion we cannot tell, but we shall neither be surprised nor mistaken in our calculation if societies were to withdraw by scores from a Church whose ministers, if they speak the truth, would *rather see them go into sin, and finally go to hell*, than allow a representation in the lawmaking department of the Church.—*Ibid.*, pp. 478–479.

## REMARKS.

We have here a plain, unequivocal development of the ulterior views of the Union Society. They are determined to carry their measures, whether with or without the consent of the majority, or to leave the Church. They call the travelling preachers "*oppressors of their brethren*," and declare that these "*oppressors*" have neither eyes to see the "*miseries*" of their flock nor hearts to feel for their "*wounds*;" nay, that they would rather see their flocks go into "*SIN*," and finally into "*HELL*," than to accord them their rights. Gracious Heaven! are these men Methodists? and are they speaking of the whole body of itinerant Methodist preachers? A few, indeed, are excepted, who, they say, however, are ground between "*the upper and nether millstones for their liberal sentiments.*" If this is the language of love, what would be the language of hatred?

Would a deist represent a Christian ministry in more odious colours? Yet the writer of the above extracts assumes the venerated name of "NEHEMIAH." What a pity he did not take the much more appropriate signature of "SANBALLAT!" Nehemiah, chap. iv.

Extract from a "Letter from the Baltimore Union Society to a Member of the Bedford Union Society, Tennessee."

"We have, for a long time, been sufficiently well informed respecting the great dissatisfaction of many intelligent brethren, who are, at the same time that they are fast friends to the doctrine of holiness which we have received as a common legacy from the great founders of Methodism, [we hope it had a higher origin,] are nevertheless unwilling to be TRIBUTARY to the perpetuation of a system of government which, in their opinion, is FORGING FETTERS FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR POSTERITY."—*Ibid.*, vol. ii, p. 90.

Extract from "An Answer to the 'Querist,' by Bartimeus."\*

"If they [the travelling preachers] go on and enslave the people, the consequence will be, that they will ultimately and inevitably enslave themselves and their children after them."—*Ibid.*, p. 37.

Extract from a "Letter to the Editors of the Mutual Rights."

"Is it not a possible case, that some of *our rulers* may be looking forward to AN ESTABLISHMENT, especially as they claim a divine right to *absolute government* over those whom they have been the instruments of converting from the error of their ways; and truly, if they have this divine right they should have it *established by law, to keep the 'restless spirits' down.*"—*Ibid.*, p. 46.

#### REMARKS.

It will be thought strange by our brethren who are not enlightened by the "Mutual Rights," that these dark designs of our ministry should have been so long carried on without detection. *To be "forging fetters for us and our posterity," "enslaving the people" and "looking forward to an establishment,"* that is, a Church established by law, by which they may "*keep the restless spirits down,*" is a terrible and treasonable conspiracy indeed. Our brethren of other denominations ought to look sharply about them, and come speedily to our assistance, lest we be all enslaved together! We put it to the consciences of our brethren to say, whether our itinerant preachers are such men as would be likely to harbour such treasonable designs against the Church and their country? whether they have ever sought to exercise authority, even of a pastoral kind, over any but those who voluntarily put themselves under their care

\* Rev. ASA SHINN.

as spiritual guides? whether with few exceptions they have not kept aloof from all political affairs—esteeming it their only business to preach a full, free, and present salvation to a lost and ruined world? and whether that can be “reform” which is to be accomplished by such slander and misrepresentation as we have quoted?

Joseph Walker's Letter to the Editorial Committee.

“ALABAMA, *Dallas county, May 19, 1826.*

“DEAR BRETHREN,—A few days ago a friend put five or six numbers of the *Mutual Rights* into my hand to read. It gave me heartfelt satisfaction to know that the spirit of reformation is at work in our favoured country, and, especially, that it has begun in the Methodist Episcopal Church, where it is so much needed. When we look back and think of the privations, and sufferings, and fightings through which our fathers struggled in the revolutionary war for the attainment of civil liberty and religious mutual rights, and then turn round and see all the principles of liberty trampled upon by our travelling preachers, in their conferences and in their administration of Church government, it is enough to grieve a heart of stone. I can but weep to see our *Zion so oppressed*. I am the son of an old patriot of the State of Pennsylvania. I have been a preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church more than twenty years, and have been ordained deacon and elder. My house has been all that time a place of retreat and rest for the travelling preachers, and of constant resort for the brethren. Having, therefore, had frequent opportunities, I have intimated to bishops, presiding elders, and travelling preachers, the propriety and necessity of reform. They have commonly replied, it might be right, perhaps, and that those who wished reform, could withdraw whenever they might see proper. I was led to pause! I pondered within myself! O, the depth of spiritual wickedness apparently in high places! O, the curse of ingratitude! Good Heavens! thought I, filled with astonishment, how many hundreds of dollars have I and many others spent for the exclusive use of the Methodist Episcopal Church! She has been our constant care, and for her we have laboured for twenty years and more; and never have we received one dollar of reward. Indeed, some of us, like the apostle Paul, would rather have died than have been deprived of this our glorying in the cross of Christ. And after all, if we object to our condition of living under continual oppression and privation, we may go out of society in search of relief! And, if we should take them at their word and go, then our characters would be destroyed. Nothing would save us from reproach if we cease to be called by this name.

“I was personally acquainted with Bishop Asbury. I have heard him converse with the Rev. Hope Hull, who was a friend to reform, and I easily collected the information that our Church government was framed



chiefly by subjects of Great Britain. Of course I never wondered much that such men should have shaped their code, and made their ecclesiastical laws according to their own model. But when I consider that nearly all our present preachers are Americans ; when I consider how excellent and powerful is the republican spirit which prevails in these United States, and how equal the civil laws under which we live ; when I see how carefully our civil and religious liberties are secured to the people of every possible variety of denomination, I am compelled to ask the question, Is not the form of our Church government and the manner in which it is administered, an open insult to the constitution of the United States ? It surely is, and were it fully investigated and exposed to public view, such a despotic institution would make a bad appearance before the observation of a religious republic.

The power of the itinerancy in this part of the country is already in a trembling condition. All that is necessary is for the people to be freed from the terrors of the gag-law. The people, generally, think rightly, if they only dare to speak out. For my part I was born in the year 1776, and a warm current of the blood of freemen runs through my veins. I delight to entertain a just sense of man's equal rights in Church and State. My son-in-law, Ebenezer Hern, is now, and for several years has been, a presiding elder in the Mississippi Conference, and my oldest son, R. L. Walker, is a travelling preacher in the same conference. These facts serve, with other considerations, as you may suppose, to make me more solicitous for a change in our Church government ; for I do not wish to see any of my family have a part in holding the reins of a government which is administered in unrighteousness.

"There are many things which I would be glad to communicate ; but I am aware that my zeal in so good a cause, after having been so long suppressed, may be in danger of rising too high. I must, therefore, come to a close.

"I send you ten dollars. You will be so good as to send me one copy of your first volume ; if convenient, send it bound. Also, six copies of your second volume. I have procured no subscribers for them as yet, but I will see to it that they shall be well circulated.

"Any use you may think fit to make of these my remarks will have my approbation. I try to live before God, independent of the frowns or smiles of men. My name is Joseph Walker ; my place of residence is Dallas county, State of Alabama.

"I will conclude with saying, that in the whole extent of my reading in ancient or modern history, I have not met with any notice of a single order of people, except the Roman Catholics and Methodists, whose preachers convene without the consent of the people, make laws for the government of the people, and afterwards turn round and execute those laws. I have been wide awake to the cause of reform fifteen years or more. But

the subject not being popular, I have been compelled to speak of it only in confidence. Men of the best minds in our itinerancy are of the same opinion. How can it be otherwise? But supremacy and self-preservation keep most of them silent. Let us be of good courage, for we have nothing to fear. Let us be faithful to God, and the cause of equal rights and the world will be secured without firing a gun, or shedding of blood."—*Ibid.*, pp. 26, 27, 28.

Extracts from "Luther<sup>2</sup> on Representation."

"MESSRS. EDITORS,—With much interest I have perused several numbers of your Mutual Rights. The friends of reform speak very intelligibly the language of the American family. They reiterate the theme of those who gloriously repose in the stillness of Thermopylæ, Marathon, Chæroneæ, Pharsalia, and Monmouth. They resist the same principle which slew the martyrs, slaughtered Poland, assailed America, and was vanquished. That principle is despotism. At this plain word some will cry out, 'Treason!' or, what is tantamount, 'Apostasy!' O, Messrs. Editors! how profoundly I regret that truth will apply this hateful characteristic to any part of Methodistical polity, the Searcher of hearts alone can tell. For sixteen years have the sympathies of my heart, and the energies of my mind, (such as they be,) been deeply interested in behalf of your Zion. During that time I have lingered with fond solicitude about your outer courts, (not having shared in her councils, though of her priesthood;) I have willingly hewn her wood and drawn her water, all the while hoping that her leading chieftains would roll away this reproach from her honour, banish this cloud from her beauty, purge this poison from her vitals, dig this volcano from her foundations, and enable her to walk forth in all her native beauty, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners, the praise of the whole earth. Until the last General Conference I viewed this despotic trait in her polity as the offspring of casualties—a sort of wild exotic, which, by some mishap, had sprung up in the garden of the Lord—a *wandering demon*, which had insinuated himself into our paradise unobserved, and, like Milton's toad at the ear of Eve, infused into the genius of our Church portentous dreams and dreary visions. I looked to that General Conference for an achievement worthy of primitive Christianity and American Methodists. My fond imagination displayed to my view an august assembly of holy men hurling this monster from the heights of their Salem, a spectacle to an admiring nation. But O, cruel disappointment! Methodism has lost one of her richest laurels; never did an epoch of her history give to her rulers so distinguished an opportunity of shedding an immortal lustre upon her own name and their own memories. But that circular, the ominous offspring of her

<sup>2</sup> Supposed to be written by a local preacher by the name of Hill, in North Carolina.

labour, too barren to merit criticism, serves only to mortify the best friends of Methodism, and to legalize oppression.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 53, 54.

“But when those representatives of the itinerancy, who alone elect them, presume to legislate for all the locality and laity of the Methodist Church, what assumption can be more unwarrantable—what system more oppressive? In case of grievance, where shall the locality and laity look for redress? They have no check upon their lawgivers. The members of the General Conference are all pledged to their itinerant brethren who sent them there; and the itinerancy in mass are all indirectly pledged to the episcopacy: hence the episcopacy is frequently strengthened, and the itinerancy is always guarded; but the rights of the laity and locality are trampled on.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 55, 56.

“O! is the religion of Jesus with all its enrapturing joys, the soul with all its indescribable powers, heaven with all its inconceivable glories, and hell with all its unutterable horrors—are these matters so trivial, that we leave them to the winds, to the speculations of self-created conclaves, while we guard the sanctuary of our civil, our momentary rights so inviolably? Illustrious prophets and martyrs, had you been thus pliant, instead of sailing through the bloody storms of time to endless rest, you had smoothly glided down to hell; instead of leaving your track to glory a living galaxy of heavenly light, the heavy clouds of the second death would now fling their thunders upon your weather-beaten spirits; instead of handing down to posterity the word of life, pure and undefiled, you had bequeathed to the world a darkness more dreary than that which fell on ancient Egypt. But, ye reverend spirits of Europe and Asia, you have fought the good fight, and laid hold upon the crown of life. It is for us American Methodists, to prostrate ourselves at the foot of a spiritual aristocracy, and say, Let us eat our own bread, and wear our own apparel; but let us be called by your name. It is for us to cower at the foot of that principle in ecclesiastics, which was chastised by our forefathers upon the agents of a civil despot. It is for us Methodists to take the humiliating responsibility of shamelessly encouraging a spiritual domination, in the face of free America. It is for us, the emancipated sons of conquering chieftains, to rivet those chains upon our descendants which were torn from our hands, if we only give them the name of religion.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 56, 57.

“But, Messrs. Editors, valuable as your paper is, the friends of reform must appeal to the public through other mediums in union with that. You encounter a well-organized, artful, enterprising opposition, which spreads through almost every city, village, and neighbourhood, from Maine to Georgia. Their first effort is to conceal to the utmost the disquietudes and grievances which exist in our Church, and to lull a spirit of inquiry to rest. Where this is impracticable, they arraign the

motives of the reformers with uncharitable and uncivil severity. Your own paper, if I have not been sadly misinformed, having been branded as a sort of libel upon the Church, published by desperate designers, has been kept out of the hands of valuable men, to whom it was addressed, and left to linger in postoffices. O, how I regret to know the men, and the character they sustain in society, who are employed in this *midnight stabbing* ! Could I believe in transmigration, I might imagine that some of the Jesuits expelled from Europe had taken up their residence in the bodies of some i—— [itinerants] in the United States. Parsimony is a stronghold, to which very successful appeals are made. The local reformers want salaries, city settlements, &c., and the great men (in common style) want to send the little men home, who serve cheaply, &c. To the last of these charges I plead guilty with all my heart ; for I have long believed, that if the Church could exercise the right of suffrage, she would sift the talents of her ministry, and secure the best for her service. But the fallacy of the other subterfuges of the anti-reformers bears its own characteristic. The majority of suffrages will always be among the laity, they will therefore have it in their power to check abuses, and, under a well-balanced form of government, those presumers who grasp so greedily after power, would sink into merited contempt, while modest worth would be duly promoted. I say you must appeal to the public through other mediums ; you have passed the Rubicon, there is no returning without a sacrifice of principle, without abandoning your Church to her degraded destiny. If you suffer another General Conference to legislate for you, I am ready to say, Prepare for tame submission or banishment. Your missionaries should now be on the highways of the nation, and in the pulpits of your Church ; and the friends of reform should send their private communications everywhere. You have the prejudices of many years arrayed against you, and that still inglorious repose which undisturbed power, *artfully administered*, gives, refuses to part with its slumbers.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 58, 59.

“Those who are now securely enthroned on the summit of the cloudy Olympus of power, when they shall feel the mount quake and tremble beneath them, will become solicitous to know what is the matter, and not before.”—*Ibid.*, p. 62.

## REMARKS.

We learn from this writer that the Methodist Episcopal Church is such a despotism as was resisted by the Greeks and Romans, and by the Americans at Monmouth ; that it is predicated on the same principles as that which “slaughtered Poland” and “slew the martyrs ;” that it is an “*assumption of authority*” that is an *usurpation* ; nay, an “unwarrantable and oppressive assumption,” and the “rights of the laity and locality

are trampled on,"—our conferences are "self-created conclaves;" that if the prophets and martyrs had been as pliant as we Methodists, they "had smoothly glided down to HELL," and "the heavy clouds of the second death would now fling their thunders upon their weather-beaten spirits;" but they fought through "bloody storms" and escaped, while we, stupid, cowering, insensible Methodists, run the risk of "hell" and the "heavy clouds," nay, the "thunders of the second death," rather than prevent all these terrible calamities, *by sending the writer and a few more of his radical local brethren to the General Conference*. Instead of this, he says, "we prostrate ourselves at the foot of a SPIRITUAL ARISTOCRACY," and "shamelessly encourage A SPIRITUAL DOMINATION." These violent denunciations and invectives might have been taken for the ravings of a madman, had they been published by himself; and the author would have been considered rather as a subject for a hospital than an object of reproof or punishment. But they have been adopted by the editorial committee of the Union Society, and given to the world as the sentiments of reformers! The communication is dated North Carolina, May, 1825; and if we have not mistaken the author, the publication, had it come out under no other sanction than his own proper name, would have been a very harmless thing indeed. These "midnight stabbing" "itinerants," into whose bodies (could he believe in transmigration) he should imagine the Jesuits had entered, can only feel these cruel aspersions when they are authorized by men of standing and character; such as conducted the work in which they have been published. We ask the editorial committee then, Can *they* be "aristocrats" who have been recommended by the laity and received by the ministry, and who hold their offices during good behaviour? If the tenure of their offices constitute them aristocrats, then are all the civil judges of our land aristocrats. Can *they* be despots and oppressors, whose authority no man is bound to obey a moment longer than he pleases; who exercise no power over any but those who voluntarily intrusted them with it, and who subsist upon the voluntary bounty of those they govern. Our ministers themselves have taught us to esteem them only as the servants, not the lords of the Church; watching over the flock of the great Shepherd and Bishop of our souls, as they who must give an account to God. Such we still esteem them, and shall persist, notwithstanding what the Union Society have said of them, to love and honour them greatly for their works' sake; at least so long as they shall continue to be as they have heretofore been, examples to the flock of Christ.

As to the letter of Mr. Joseph Walker, we deem it unnecessary to comment upon it. As the impotent rage of perhaps a valetudinary, and certainly of an angry man, it can only derive importance from the sanction which the Union Society have given to the abuse which he so liberally

bestows on the itinerant preachers. If Mr. Walker's manners are not better, he has certainly more *honesty* than Luther, for he gives his name. The Union Society have recognised them both as partisans, and are justly chargeable with a participation in the calumny and evil-speaking which abounds in both of the communications.

Extracts from "Timothy's<sup>o</sup> Address to the Junior Bishop† of the Methodist Episcopal Church."

"I think it is pretty clear from Moore's life of Mr. Wesley, that Dr. Coke exceeded his authority in the affair of a third ordination, and in taking to himself and Mr. Asbury the name of bishop. The forming a Church government which gives all ecclesiastical *power* to the *ministry* was a *bold step*. But bishops stop not here; the creation of presiding elders, who are the *special agents of the bishops*, has given them a degree of *power* over the *whole Church*, which really looks *alarming*. And now, four of our bishops divide the whole work of these United States between them, and our *senior bishop is arched over the whole*. What does this look like? In fifty years power has marched farther in the Methodist Episcopal Church, than it did in the first three centuries of the Primitive Church; and yet with all these facts before you, the people are admonished to abstain from reading the Mutual Rights, and to let such investigations alone! GOD FORBID!"—Vol. iii, p. 112.

"We should be more inexcusable than the members of the Christian Church, in the rise of Popery, if we were to suffer our spiritual rulers to enslave us; we have many advantages unknown to them, particularly the printing-press,—what a blessing this has been to the world! what a scourge to wild and lawless ambition!"—*Ibid.*

"To me it does appear to be a duty which we owe to the glorious Author of our holy religion, to our fellow-Christians, and to posterity, to discuss this subject before the whole Church, that the slumbering sons of our Zion may be roused and kept awake, with an attentive eye fixed on THE STEALING MARCH OF ECCLESIASTICAL POWER. We have seen what the Christian Church was in its origin, we have seen what it *grew to* in process of time. The people trusted too much to the goodness and infallibility of the ministry: and the preachers seeing this, took advantage of it, and went on increasing their own power until the Church was ruined. Let the Methodist Episcopal Church take warning. The wreck of one fallen Church now covers the world, and what has happened to the Church of Rome may happen to us if we are not *careful, vigilant, prayerful, and resolute*."—*Ibid.*, p. 113.

"Is even sober inquiry on the part of our people so *terrifying* to our junior bishop? O my dear sir, let your present *palpitations* teach you, if

<sup>o</sup> Rev. G. Brown, an itinerant minister.      † Bishop Hedding.

*nothing else will*, that all is not right in our Church government, and that to assuage your *fears* you must lessen your *power*; nothing is more *alarming* to men in your *situation*, than *even a just reaction of public feeling*. Still you oppose the Mutual Rights for fear of agitating our people; did *Luther, and Calvin, and Zwingle and their coadjutors feel the force of this argument?* Did they abandon their *holy enterprise*, for fear of disturbing his holiness, in *St. Peter's chair*, for fear of agitating the Church of Rome? *No verily, they did not; nor will we.*

"I am inclined to think that no branch of the Christian Church has, for several centuries, been in such a *dilemma* as ours. We are in a *strait betwixt two*,—between '*agitating*' the Church, on the one hand, (*if calm discussion will agitate it*.) and the *bold march of ecclesiastical power* on the other. If we let *power* march on, the Church is ruined. If we attempt by our *investigations to arrest it in its course*, the Church it seems will be '*agitated*.' Under a conviction that there is some analogy between the natural and moral world; that as the ebbing and flowing of the tide has a tendency to purify the ocean; and that thunder storms tend to purify the atmosphere which surrounds our earth; so, also, does the agitating of the great political, ecclesiastical, philosophical, and religious questions, by which the attention of the community has now and then been arrested, tend, more or less, to *political, ecclesiastical, philosophical, and moral purity*. Under a conviction of *these things* I have been led to adopt my present course, with a fixed determination to be *troublesome to lovers of power and prerogative so long as I live*."—*Ibid.*, p. 114.

"As to your advice to '*be still and say nothing, until we stand on the floor of the General Conference*,' I can only say, that the delegates for that body are yet unknown, and perhaps arrangements may be made by '*caucusing*' or otherwise to leave reformers all at home. (The like has been heard of.)\* In such an event are we to be kept out of General Conference by *stratagem*, and forced into silence too? This will be very hard indeed; a few such attempts have been made. They succeeded, and a *few more* will make a *new Church*. Brethren ought to be above *stratagem* when they elect their delegates; surely we are *far gone* after the *mother of harlots* when we can practise *pious frauds*! *Every honest man should abandon the Church, as he would abandon a sinking ship, so soon as she determines on carrying her measures by trick, stratagem, or pious fraud*. It is to be hoped the episcopacy will have nothing to do with these things. If they do, I here advertise them, that *they*, and not the *reformers*, must bear the *blame* if commotion shall *ensue*."—*Ibid.*, p. 116.

"The bishop has some fears for his power, or why all this exertion against reform? Bishop and travelling preachers have all the power in the government of our Zion, and this address plainly says, that by the *grace of*

\* Witness the Baltimore Conference at Winchester, 1824.

God or otherwise, they mean to keep it; a love of power always marches onward, crying, Give, give! And men of great prerogatives are rarely known to yield them in order to secure the general welfare.' In short, sir, your hand seemed to be against every man whose hand might be against the episcopal and ministerial power of our Church. You took your stand against all who would ask you, for Christ's sake, for the Church's sake, for peace' sake, to let some of your ecclesiastical power fall into other hands."—*Ibid.*, p. 117.

## REMARKS.

This writer would really alarm us if we could bring ourselves to believe all his forebodings. But, as we know his premises are false, we cannot doubt the fallacy of his conclusions. "And now four of our bishops," he says, "divide the whole work of these United States between them, *and our senior bishop is arched over the whole. What does this look like?*" Why really it looks very like an archbishopric; and from this the author naturally comes to the conclusion that "in fifty years power has marched farther in the Methodist Episcopal Church than it did in the first three centuries of the primitive Church! Mr. M'Kendree is then an archbishop! We were not prepared for this. We had considered Mr. M'Kendree as superannuated, and as having for some years declined the arduous duties of the episcopacy,—devoting indeed his remaining strength to the cause to which he consecrated his youth and his riper years, but leaving the administration of the government almost wholly in the hands of his junior associates in the episcopal office. We believe, moreover, that this exemption from the burden and cares of office was asked and obtained from the General Conference: and now he is to be accused of usurping an archiepiscopal authority! The gray hairs of this veteran ought to have saved him this taunting appellation. His faithful labours, his devoted life, his long and invaluable services to the Church, and even his many infirmities, ought to have shielded him from this biting sarcasm—this unfeeling insult. The author well knew that there existed no legal superiority among the bishops, whatever preference might be accorded by the juniors to the age and experience of the elder incumbent of the episcopal office. Doctor Jennings, in his defence "INTENDED TO HAVE BEEN DELIVERED" before the district conference, rings the changes on the circumstance of his being an "aged minister." How much did he respect the feelings of aged ministers when he inserted in his periodical this bitter philippic against this good old man—this aged, venerable minister of the Lord Jesus Christ? But the doctor was *reforming the Church*, "after his fashion," and the bishop, as well as most if not all the senior itinerant ministers, stood in his way, and he could not therefore consent to spare them.

There does not appear, even from the writer's own showing, that there



was anything amiss in the junior bishop's valedictory address to the Pittsburg Conference. There was an exhortation to peace and concord—a wish expressed that the preachers should avoid agitating the Church, by discussing amongst the members the subject of changing our form of government, and this we presume applied as well to those who were opposed to the change as to those who were in favour of it. The bishop no doubt thought that the preachers might lessen their usefulness, if they enlisted themselves as partisans in this dispute, which has already excited too much feeling; and he very properly advised them to postpone the discussion, until by themselves or their representatives, they should have an opportunity calmly and deliberately to consider it on the floor of the General Conference, where only it could be determined. He further advised them not to aid in the circulation of the "Mutual Rights," and we think the extracts from that work which we have given fully justify the advice of the bishop. He could not believe that a Methodist preacher ought to give countenance or currency to a work in which his brethren and fellow-labourers are calumniated and abused. From this advice, however, the most unwarrantable inferences are drawn as to the bishop's motives and principles. The writer ascribes to him a thirst for power and desire of domination, which is only equalled by the papacy. "We should be more inexcusable," says he, "than the members of the Christian Church in the rise of popery, if we were to suffer *our spiritual rulers to enslave us*; we have many advantages unknown to them, particularly the printing-press,—what a blessing this has been to the world, *what a scourge to wild and lawless ambition!*"—vol. iii. P. 112. He advises us to "keep an attentive eye *on the stealing march of ecclesiastical power.*" And he intimates an apprehension lest what has happened to the Church of Rome may happen to us. He infers from the bishop's address, without any reason whatever, that he is an enemy to religious liberty. The address he supposes meant that "to *obey* was enough for the people,"—bishops govern in all the plenitude of their power by "a divine right, which ought not to be examined or called in question." And he proposes to hold Mr. Hedding up to the political execration of the people—for he says, "I do, sir, think it my duty, to hold your conduct up to public view, *that all men may know, what a genuine friend to the rights of man you are; and how entirely republicanism governs all your movements.*" Now would not any man infer from all this vituperation and abuse, that the bishop had greatly infringed upon the author's rights, or uttered some opinions on the subject of government subversive of our civil institutions? Yet nothing of this had happened. He had only dissuaded the preachers from aiding the circulation of a slanderous publication, and exhorted them to such conduct as he thought necessary to preserve them in the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

As to the "*stealing march of ecclesiastical power*" which is complained

of, the writer knew that the march had been retrograde. The ministry have much less power than formerly; and the lessening this power was the voluntary act of the ministry. They once expelled members from the Church at will, and appointed stewards and made preachers, without any reference to the people—none of these powers now remain with the preachers; and as to the superintendents, they have less power now than Mr. Wesley's general assistant had before the revolutionary war,—that is, than Mr. Asbury had before he was made bishop,—for then he dismissed preachers from the travelling connexion whenever he thought it proper or necessary. What bishop has any such power now? In fact they have no power, but that of making the preachers' appointments, that is, of distributing the labourers as the state of the vineyard may require; and this they do by the authority of the preachers themselves. All this was known, we suppose, to the editorial committee of the Union Society—for we would not suppose them ignorant of their discipline and the history of their Church. We infer then that they published this writer's remarks knowing that they were unfounded. Yet they allege "they have not been charged with any immorality!" They must excuse us if we entertain a different opinion.

We have heard that the writer (Timothy) who is a member of the Pittsburgh Conference, made some explanations or apologies to his brethren in conference, which were accepted. This however makes no atonement for the offence of those who published his remarks—they have offered no apology for their participation in the affair.

Extracts from "Miscellaneous Remarks, by Dissenter."<sup>2</sup>

"I confess it is a source of peculiar gratification to me to see the spirit of determined inquiry so extensively diffused among our people, notwithstanding conference lectures, pulpit hints, and class-room lessons to prevent it. These warning voices so often lifted up in our hearing are the evident misgivings of power, and so many proofs that our arguments in favour of reform are felt even by those who affect to despise them. A fourth of my prefatory remarks was, that although much good feeling may be lost in this controversy, yet, as the present and future interests of the Church require it, reformers ought not to blench from their purpose, whatever *social* sacrifices they may be called upon to make, but ought to continue in the Church, and multiply and vary their efforts, until the existing anomaly of government in the Methodist Episcopal Church shall revert to its primitive Wesleyan standard, in which state, if we can credit Mr. Wesley's declarations, it was never intended that the Methodists should become an ecclesiastical establishment, headed by an episcopal hierarchy, consisting of an indefinite number of incumbents, all possessing the same powers and ruling the same diocese. The model for such a state of things

<sup>2</sup> Rev. H. B. Bascom.

is not to be met with in the whole range of Church history, *except when four individuals at the same time claimed by divine right the chair of popedom in the Roman see.* If the reader is startled at this, let him recollect that things that are alike in their nature and progress will be compared by the human mind, and classed accordingly."—*Ibid.*, pp. 148, 149.

"We cannot expect to succeed immediately in the great objects we have in view. I have no hope that the next General Conference will do anything for us. *We have too many men in power, bishops and would-be-bishops, that are hovering over the nucleus of ecclesiastical aggrandizement,* and already laying their plans to prevent the election of reformers to the General Conference, to indulge the hope, even for a moment, that we shall be able to accomplish much in any short time. But the fact that they are thus industrious to defeat the objects of reform is the proof of our success. *Let them manoeuvre, let them caucus, let them buy men by the 'sale of indulgences.'*" all will ultimately operate in our favour, and only multiply our friends."—*Ibid.*, p. 149.

"But Mr. Wesley seems not to have contemplated an episcopacy in any shape. It is, to be sure, asserted, in the preface to our Book of Discipline; but the oldest preachers in the United States, with whom I have conversed and corresponded on this subject, never saw the warrant. It has been called for by friends and foes for thirty years, but is not yet forthcoming. If such warrant exists, why is it that we can learn nothing about it?"—*Ibid.*, p. 152.

"But until such document or warrant from Mr. Wesley be produced, *I, as an individual, must, of necessity, continue to doubt the historical probity of the preface to our Book of Discipline,* in relation to this particular."—*Ibid.*

"What had Wesleyan Methodism to do with our self-created and self-styled episcopacy? For, I repeat it, Dr. Coke was only set apart as a superintendent of the American Methodists, and not ordained to a third office as a prelatical bishop. The ceremony of separation was only intended to confer Mr. Wesley's authority to oversee the American Methodists upon another, as Mr. Wesley could not attend to them in person. What did original Methodism know of our order of presiding elders?—one man having power to appoint seventy, to overrule and remove at pleasure fourteen hundred? Where in the annals of original Methodism did the framers of our Discipline meet with the ceremony of ordination for a bishop?"—*Ibid.*, p. 153.

"The improvements proposed in our present form of government are openly denounced as 'innovations.' This is somewhat singular, when every man of information knows that our whole system of episcopacy in the United States is, to all intents and purposes, an 'innovation' upon the genius and plans of Wesleyan Methodism, and one expressly disapproved and disavowed by Mr. Wesley."—*Ibid.*, p. 154.

Extract from "An Appeal to the Good Sense of the Citizens of the United States, by Rev. Asa Shinn."

"P. S.—If the Baltimore brethren think me visionary in supposing the reformers will finally be successful, let me explain myself. I do not think any *sudden* reformation either practicable or desirable, but that the cause will advance *gradually* and *surely*. Do I suppose this will be done without opposition? Far from it: I believe the powers that be, 'from the episcopal chair down to the foundling's stool,' will strain every nerve to crush us; that the reformers will have to advance like men struggling against wind and tide, against rain and snow, and hail, and thunder, and lightning. The minds of many, I expect, will storm and rage, as though they really believed we intended to pull down the moon, or as though they thought our success would destroy *morality, civilization, Methodism, and Christianity!* And all this will be nothing more nor less than an anxious, trembling effort, to support the wonderful sacredness of *human authority!* The world has been so long befooled with delusion, that many appear disposed to act as though they believed that if it were not for the great prop of human authority it would be doubtful whether Almighty God would be able to take care of the Christian world."—*Ibid.*, p. 212.

Extract from "Presbyter" to the Editors of the Mutual Rights."

"Now the object of these remarks, Messrs. Editors, is to show that our episcopacy has nothing to do with original Wesleyan Methodism, and is disowned by it. It cannot, therefore, be in any way essential to our prosperity; for the history of the British Methodists and that of the American Methodists for eighteen years, proves clearly and indubitably that its alleged importance in order to the success of Christianity among us, is a perfectly gratuitous assumption, unsupported by reason, history, or common sense. On the other hand, if our bishops and their pertinacious supporters as high-toned Episcopalians, ill as it may look, (for such they really are,) would yield and distribute throughout the different departments of the Church that part of their power that has come into their hands 'SURREPTITIOUSLY,' it would abate the honest inquietude of thousands, it would remove the just apprehensions of the discerning, and bring worthy multitudes into the bosom of the Methodist Church, whose names, as things now are, will never adorn our calendar. Of the truth of these remarks I have no doubt; and surely one who has travelled as a Methodist itinerant preacher at least fifty thousand miles, may be permitted to speak on a subject that lies so near his heart, and is vitally connected with the individual and social interest of living and unborn millions! With these remarks, Messrs. Editors, I close; but as I have passed the Rubicon, you may hear from me again about the ides of March."—*Ibid.*, p. 232.

² Rev. H. B. Bascom.

Extracts from "Reasons in Plea for Reform in the Government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, by Neale." 2

"4th. From the preceding facts it appears, that the introduction of episcopacy among the Methodists in the United States, so far from being 'recommended' by Mr. Wesley, was expressly disapproved and forbidden, and the proceedings of the General Conference of 1784, in establishing *diocesan* episcopacy among us, was in open violation of the instructions of Mr. Wesley; and I now take the liberty of saying to the Rev. William M'Kendree, Enoch George, Robert R. Roberts, Joshua Soule, and Elijah Hedding, that a statement on this subject, to which I find their names subscribed, in the preface to our Book of Discipline, is believed by *many* TO BE A PERVERSION OF HISTORICAL FACT, and they are hereby publicly called upon to furnish some *evidence* of the truth of the aforesaid statement; or leave us to infer, that such evidence cannot be produced. In justice, however, to these distinguished individuals in the Methodist Episcopal Church, I would say distinctly, I believe they are all innocent of having made this statement originally, but they have made it their *own*, by giving it the sanction of their names, as I have not been able to learn that this preface has ever been sanctioned by any General Conference: if it *has*, upon learning it I shall make (should God preserve my life) a similar call on the next General Conference, as the proper organ of information: at present the bishops appear to be the *only* responsible persons, and on *them* I call. Should the policy of the cabinet induce them to remain silent, as heretofore on similar occasions, I shall take the liberty of thinking they cannot answer me, without damage to their own cause, which, it would seem, must be supported by *silence*. 5th. As it is in proof before the reader that Methodist episcopacy can derive no support from the *name* or *sanction* of Mr. Wesley, *both* having been *definitely* withheld, so also does it admit of proof that the great body of the Methodist ministers and members in the United States were not *consulted* at all in the adoption of this enormously mis-shapen system of aristocratic government. It was the *undivulged* project, the favourite scheme of a few master spirits, who meeting in secret conclave and excluding the junior members even of their own body, (as living witnesses declare,) acknowledging no constitutional rights, and comprehending no legislative privileges as belonging to any except themselves, proceeded to the *hasty* formation of the present plan of government among us, and *unblushingly palmed it upon posterity as the offspring of Mr. Wesley's wisdom and experience*. 6th. The *SPURIOUS* origin of Methodist episcopacy, is to be inferred from the fact that those very individuals who made these pretensions, were unsettled and felt *misgivings* on the subject.

2 Rev. H. B. Bascom.

"Dr. Coke, in a letter to Bishop White of Philadelphia, *doubts* the power of Mr. Wesley to confer legitimate episcopal authority; he does the same in a letter to the bishop of London, written subsequently, in both of which he *modestly* asks for re-ordination."—*Ibid.*, pp. 310, 311.

"In the present preface to our Book of Discipline, the adoption of our present form of government is attributed to the express instructions of Mr. Wesley; but the venerable Wesley has, unequivocally, *disavowed* the honour, and no one has ever shown or quoted the document, paper, or verbal instructions of Mr. Wesley. It is now nearly a year since all our bishops were *respectfully* invited to furnish information on this subject, if they had any to furnish; they have not even deigned a reply of any kind: passing by the *uncourteousness* of such an act, and the insult it offers to the wishes of inquiring thousands, who, it is *known* to the bishops, feel a deep interest in the subject, I shall plead their apology, by taking it for granted that they *would* have replied if they had been able to do so, without *defacing* the beauty of those 'institutions received from their fathers,' many of whom are *still living*; or, perhaps, like the Chinese historians, they are unacquainted with their own *origin* because their *living* fathers *conceal it*.

"But finally, Mr. Asbury pleads his authority as a Methodist bishop, on the following grounds:—'1st. Divine authority. 2d. Seniority in America. 3d. Election of the General Conference, 1784. 4th. Ordination of Coke, Otterbine, Whatcoat, and Vasey. 5th. Because the signs of an apostle were found in him.' See Asbury's Journal for May, 1805, 3d vol., page 191. No 'succession' directly hinted at here, no allusion to Mr. Wesley. On this *expose* of the *arcana* of Methodist episcopacy, I would only say: it is plain, Mr. Asbury is here speaking of himself as a bishop of the third order, and superior to presbyters. Of his 'divine authority' we can say nothing, only we know it was not received from the Scriptures. As to 'seniority' we have yet to learn that it ever creates any *new* civil or religious rights. With regard to the vote of the 'General Conference' electing Mr. Asbury, it is only necessary to observe, they might have acted unadvisedly in this vote of the Conference of 1784 as well as in others; and we know that *many* of the acts of that very Conference have been since *repealed*, as improper and disadvantageous. On the subject of 'ordination,' as it was only an ordination by presbyters, we cannot admit its 'episcopal validity,' if more be meant than a presbyter. As it respects the last item, the signs of an apostle can only be seen *in an apostle*, and of course have not been seen *since* the apostolic age. Thus the reader will perceive that our 'fathers' acted a palpably inconsistent part in the introduction of episcopacy among us, and have been under the necessity (created by their own indiscretion) of acting an equally awkward, and I fear posterity will think, ridiculous part in defending themselves against the charge of a RECKLESS USURPATION OF UNWARRANTED POWER."—*Ibid.*, pp. 312, 313.

## REMARKS.

The first remark we have to make upon the preceding quotations is, that the studied endeavour of the Union Society of Baltimore to make the reformers elsewhere believe that they did not sanction Mr. M'Caine's "History and Mystery," is frustrated by the obvious coincidence between the assertions in their own publications and Mr. M'Caine's pamphlet. Much as we disapprove of Mr. M'Caine's conduct, we do not think he has been well used by his brethren of the Union Society. Since the masterly refutation of all the allegations in the "History and Mystery," by Dr. Emory, in his able "Defence of our Fathers," the members of the Union Society not only deny their having recommended the publication, but have almost wholly ceased to defend it. Now although, for reasons heretofore given, they did not vote as a society to recommend it, yet there can be no doubt of their having generally encouraged him to publish the work; and we have seen that they reiterated most of his opinions and unfounded assertions in the "Mutual Rights." To leave him now to bear alone the obloquy and disgrace he has incurred in the common cause is neither fair nor honourable, and the stratagem is as hopeless as it is unfair. The copartnership is obvious, and the *mutual rights* and mutual responsibilities will be ascertained and adjudged accordingly by the public.

In the quotations from the "Mutual Rights" which we have selected, the reader will find it expressly asserted, that "Mr. Wesley does not seem to have contemplated an episcopacy in any shape. It is, to be sure, asserted in the preface to our Book of Discipline; but the oldest preachers in the United States with whom I have conversed and corresponded on this subject never saw the warrant." They had seen, nevertheless, Mr. Wesley's letter of ordination to Dr. Coke. "But until such document or warrant from Mr. Wesley be produced, I, as an individual, must of necessity continue to doubt the *historical probity* of the preface to our Book of Discipline in this particular." And "Neale" says of our episcopal government, that this "enormously mis-shapen system of aristocratical government was the *undivulged* project, the favourite scheme of a *few master spirits, who, meeting in secret conclave*, and excluding the junior members even of their own body, (as living witnesses declare,) acknowledging no constitutional rights, and comprehending no legislative privileges as belonging to any except themselves, proceeded to the *hasty* formation of the present plan of government amongst us, and *unblushingly palmed it upon posterity as the offspring of Mr. Wesley's wisdom and experience.*" Again: its origin is termed "*spurious*" and "*surreptitious*," and it is said that those who made it "were *unsettled* and felt misgivings on the subject." Wicked it seems they were, and wicked enough to palm a falsehood upon their brethren and upon posterity, though they were not past all feeling—not quite

reprobate—for they had some qualms of conscience about it. The Machiavellian policy, however, prevailed, and they have continued to republish this falsehood in every succeeding edition of the Discipline down to the present time. The present bishops have moreover made this wickedness “their own by giving it the sanction of their names.” But this is not all. To perpetuate this shameless imposition, these bishops are represented as “caucusing,” “manœuvring,” and “buying men by the sale of indulgences,” all over the United States. The “sale of indulgences” being one of the many evil practices charged upon the Church of Rome, has a specific meaning; but if we are startled at this, as well as other identifications with the Romish hierarchy even in the darkest period of her history, we are reminded that “things that are alike in their *nature* and *progress* will be compared by the human mind and classed accordingly.”

We do not propose to enter upon a regular defence of our fathers. That has been already done in the answer to Mr. M'Caine, which we have just alluded to. But we would ask, What has Mr. M'Caine alleged against Mr. Asbury and Dr. Coke, together with the Conference of 1784, which is not in substance repeated in these extracts? Most of the worthies of that Conference have fallen asleep in Jesus; they are enjoying the reward of their labours, where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest. Some of their contemporaries still live, to edify the Church by their ministry and by their holy example. The surviving veterans who were in that Conference, (to say nothing of those who are gone,) we cannot believe would either originate or connive at a falsehood.

Mr. Wesley's ordination of Dr. Coke—his appointment of the doctor as superintendent of the Methodists in America—his nomination of Mr. Asbury as joint superintendent—his Liturgy prepared for us as an “episcopal Church,” in which are contained the different forms of ordinations for deacons, elders, and superintendents—are all matters of notoriety and of record. That the Conference published what they had done immediately after the session terminated, is also certain, for we have the original edition of the Minutes now before us. And in these Minutes they designate the Church by the appellation of the “Methodist Episcopal Church.” This took place several years before Mr. Wesley's death; and that the conduct of Dr. Coke, Mr. Asbury, and the Conference of 1784, both as to the form of Church government they adopted, and the particular designation of “Episcopal Church,” by which they denominated it, met his entire approbation, we have the most unequivocal evidence. We admit that he disapproved of the title of “bishop,” which was some time afterwards given to the superintendents, and for this he had particular reasons; which, however, were peculiar to him, and grew out of his relation to the Established Church of England, but could not be expected to have the same



influence upon us, who had *dissolved* that relation, both as citizens and as a religious society. We "stood fast in that liberty wherewith God had so strangely made us free." As an "Episcopal" Church, we thought proper to call our "episcopoi" by the title which our translators of the Bible used in translating the original Greek word—namely, "bishops." But we had taken the title, and formed a constitution under the appellation of the "Methodist Episcopal Church," for years before the title of bishop was known amongst us; and, in fact, whether our episcopoi had been called superintendents, overseers, or bishops, we should still have been an episcopal Church. As to the charge of our having at any time considered our bishops as a distinct ministerial order, contradistinguished from, and superior to, presbyters or elders, it has no foundation in fact. The very circumstance of our having acknowledged the *right* of elders to ordain, is a sufficient refutation of the allegation. We consider the episcopacy a superior office in the Church—not a distinct ministerial order; and this is the light in which it has been considered ever since its institution. What, then, can justify or extenuate the abuse which has been poured upon our ministry by the Union Society, or their agents, the editorial committee? We do not complain of them for differing in opinion with their brethren in reference to the necessity or propriety of perpetuating our episcopal form of government; but we contend that their moral and social obligations are violated by thus defaming the characters, and unjustly impugning the motives of our ministers, by thus charging them with palming a "surreptitious," "spurious episcopacy," upon the Church, and perpetuating their usurped authority by "printing and publishing a falsehood," "caucusing," "manœuvring," and "buying men by the sale of indulgences."

Dr. Jennings, when he complained so dolefully of the injuries inflicted upon him, "an aged minister," ought to have reflected that, as one of the editorial committee of the "Mutual Rights," he had assailed the spotless reputation of men who laboured in the ministry before he knew what religion was—nay, perhaps before he was born; some of them, indeed, are happily beyond the reach of calumny or detraction: but their friends still live, and retain the most lively recollection of their worth. He cannot suppose that the characters of such men as these were, can be held up to public odium without wounding the feelings of their friends and spiritual children who still survive—nor, indeed, without affording matter of rejoicing to the infidel and the profligate, and greatly injuring the cause of God. If there were any just grounds for the accusations, we should be grieved, but we would not complain. We might even then think that it might be wise, as well as kind, to throw the mantle of charity over the errors of the dead, if not of the living, especially when it is admitted that they did much good in their day and generation; yet if any were dis-

posed to do otherwise, we love truth enough to submit in silence. But when these accusations are totally destitute of truth, and only got up to subserve a party purpose, we cannot and dare not be silent—for Jerusalem's sake we will not hold our peace. That the allegations were not believed even by those who made them is sufficiently obvious. They could not, upon any other supposition, consent to wave their objections to the rest of a system of government represented to have been gotten up in fraud, and sustained by falsehood, intrigue, manœuvring, and selling indulgences, provided it might be so altered as to give them a greater participation in the management of the concern. Yet this has been most kindly offered!—as may be seen by reference to their printed memorial to the General Conference.

Extract from "The Sovereignty of Methodism in the South, by a Virginia Methodist."

"Suppose some president of the United States should succeed to establish himself in the presidential chair for life, and should have a law enacted forbidding the citizens, on pain of imprisonment, banishment, or death, to 'inveigh' against the government, either by *objecting* to any of its laws, by *petitioning* for their repeal, or using any *argument*, through the medium of speech or of the press, to evince their impropriety; would not the American people find this to be a 'gag-law,' a hundred degrees worse than any they have ever yet had to complain of? And in what would such a law differ from our present 'gag-law' in the Discipline, on supposition that it is to be so explained as to sanction the administration of Benton Field? It will require all the clerical talents of old Virginia to point out any difference, excepting that the latter only involves the Church penalty of expulsion: in principle, they would be precisely the same; and this principle, with a sufficient enlargement of power in the hierarchy, would soon bring the Christian community again under the penalties of corporeal punishment. Yet this tyranny is sanctioned by the Virginia Annual Conference!

"An orthodox brother took an early opportunity to give the public the following information:—'We have had a fine conference, and the appointments of the preachers you will receive in a few days. Three bishops attended—Bishop M'Kendree, whose health and spirits are better than usual, and Bishops Roberts and Soule, who are in good health.' Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that the preacher in charge had several members expelled from the Church, in defiance of all law, both human and divine, and yet 'a *fine* conference,' with 'three bishops' at its head, and could not discover this to be 'mal-administration.' The next number of the Christian Advocate (the 27th) contains a more full account, in which we are informed 'the venerable Bishop M'Kendree addressed them in a very affectionate and feeling manner. He then concluded with an ex-

hortation to holiness,' upon which the conference afterwards 'adopted the following resolution: 'That the doctrine of holiness, recommended by our Discipline, and forcibly impressed in the address of the bishop, be duly weighed and enforced by the members of this conference.'

"It is hoped 'the members of this Conference,' in 'duly weighing' the subject of Christian holiness, will try to acquire just views of its nature and extent; and that while they justly expostulate with those who oppose the doctrine, as being advocates for sin, they will not forget to raise a warning voice against those who make professions of holiness and sanctification as a *cloak* for their sins. By what tests is it to be ascertained that a man is *not* sanctified? They are such as the following: 'He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.' 1 John ii, 9. 'If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar.' 1 John iv, 20. 'But why dost thou *judge* thy brother? or why dost thou *set at naught* thy brother? for we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of Christ.' Rom. xiv, 10. 'But Diotrephes, *who loveth to have the pre-eminence* among them, receiveth us not, . . . prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and *forbiddeth* them that would, and *casteth them out of the Church*.' 3 John 9, 10. For a man who is in the habit of such conduct as is thus condemned by the divine laws, to get up in love-feast and say, 'At the last prayer-meeting, or at the last camp-meeting, I was *sanctified*,' is an insult to God and to all Christian morality. Alas! how many thousands are zealous advocates for the doctrine of sanctification, and are ready to fly into a passion in defence of Christian *perfection*, who are merely fond of the *sentiment*, not because they have a true *hungering and thirsting after righteousness*, but because the doctrine is a distinguishing *peculiarity* of *Methodism*! The doctrine of holiness is valuable beyond expression, and may be justly regarded as the great consummation of Christianity; but sectarian partiality appears to corrupt everything it touches; and such are the mysteries of human nature, that it would be no matter of surprise if the time should come, when a man would be ready to cut his brother's throat in defence of the doctrine of Christian perfection. In what way our Virginia brethren intend to '*enforce*' the 'doctrine of holiness,' they have not explained: perhaps their conduct will hereafter explain it."—*Ibid.*, pp. 261–263.

"A keen-eyed opponent will be likely to perceive, with terrible indignation, that we are waging war against 'the episcopacy!' Yes: this absolute sovereignty is the centre point of our opposition; while it stands in its present mighty energy all reformation is hopeless, and an increase of moral darkness and corruption will be inevitable. We have no quarrel with our present bishops: we believe them to be good men; and that none of them have become, by many degrees, so corrupted by this same

great 'episcopacy,' as many of their tame underlings and dependants have become."—*Ibid.*, p. 264.

Extracts from "An Address to the Friends of Reform, by N. Snethen."

"DEAR BRETHREN,—You have heard of what was done in the bounds of the Virginia Conference, and will hear of the proceedings in the Baltimore Annual Conference, in the case of Dennis B. Dorsey. I notice this last case as a proof of the fact that the itinerant preachers have taken a stand against reform, or representation, which must change our relation to them. We are no longer to consider ourselves as standing upon the open and equal ground of argument with those brethren in behalf of a principle, but as the supporters of what we conceive to be truth and right opposed by power. From the beginning I have considered the avoiding of written discussion by almost all the itinerant preachers on the old side as ominous of this issue, and have not ceased to anticipate the time when a display of the plenary powers in their hands would, in effect, place us as lambs among wolves, and call upon us to be 'wise as serpents and harmless as doves.'

"I understand the text in its original application, 'I send you forth as lambs among wolves,' that is, with truth and right, among those who have both the power and disposition to resist your principles and to destroy you, but I give you no means of self-defence, but the wisdom of the serpent tempered with the harmlessness of the dove. We have all along asserted that there is power enough in the rulers of the Methodist Episcopal Church to excommunicate us all, and we are still of the same opinion; but, if any one should doubt it, let him remember that the body of men of whom we mean to ask for a fish may give us a scorpion; that the very General Conference of 1828 may make rules, if they conceive they are not already made, to reach every reformer.

"Our relation, I say, was changed, in point of fact, from the day the power of the itinerant preachers waked into action. The most distinguished preacher, who should advocate the principle of representation, would find himself obnoxious to power, as well as the least member of the Church. No man among us has power to oppose to power; and truth or right, in the mouth of a minister, would not lose its lamb-like helplessness, when assailed by the power of a majority of itinerant preachers. This majority have all the claws, and all the teeth, and therefore every man may be made to fear.

"This fact, brethren, we ought not, by any excitement of zeal, to lose sight of for a moment. I therefore repeat it: truth or right in the grasp of power is like lambs among wolves. Hitherto reformers have spoken and written freely and openly; they have had no secrets; the wisdom of the serpent was not necessary. The charge of imprudence, and the general

cast of all the objections brought against them, goes to show that power was not roused—that the prey, though within reaching distance, was not seized. Henceforth the character and conduct of Methodists must rapidly change. On the side of power there will be fierceness, and on the side of right concealment. Threatenings and suspicions will mightily prevail. A name has already been demanded,—not, I presume, to satisfy curiosity or to confute arguments, but for punishment, or at least impeachment.

“Heretofore it is doubtful if a single travelling preacher has written for the Wesleyan Repository or the Mutual Rights who was not known to his superiors. The writers themselves often confided their proper names to their brethren, and so they felt not like lambs among wolves; but a few examples in the annual conferences will put an end to this kind of generous rivalry. Travelling preachers themselves will be thus painfully taught the wisdom of the serpent—taught to elude power by policy. What a temptation will this prove to trespass upon the innocence of the dove! Brother Dorsey, it seems, was advised by his friends (in this advice I did not participate) not to answer any question which might criminate himself. This refusal to answer questions, this putting the conference upon the proof of his guilt, made a part of his offence. Whom then did he thus offend? No one but the members of the annual conference. Now mark, brethren, the importance of this whole transaction—not to brother Dorsey merely, but to us all. Let this procedure be established as a precedent, and of what avail will the maxim of our Master be to us? How can we maintain the harmlessness of the dove?—how escape the jaws of power without dissimulation? Surely, if we have no right to keep our own secrets among those who make a man an offender for a word, we have no means of self-preservation but in the unqualified wisdom of the serpent.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 248–250.

“I deem it proper, brethren, in this portentous change, in this state of our affairs, that you should hear my voice, should see my name. It will, I know it will—it must be asked, now the time is come to try men’s souls, Where is Philopisticus? Where is Adynasius? Where is Senex? Where is the man who was among the foremost to challenge us to the cause of representation? Where is Snethen? I trust that while he is among the living but one answer will be given to this question; he is at his post, he is in the front of the contest, he is shouting, *On*, brethren, *on*! and if he fall, it will be with a wound in his breast, and with his head direct towards the opponent.”—*Ibid.*, p. 251.

Letter addressed to the Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey by a travelling preacher.

“MY DEAR SIR,—Not knowing you *personally* nor the *place* of your residence, I ask the privilege of addressing you through the medium of the

‘Mutual Rights,’ for *approving and recommending* of which you now stand *suspended* as a Methodist travelling preacher! The Baltimore Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, with three or more bishops present to direct and shape its measures, have, by a solemn resolution, after several days’ deliberation, *officially* decided that a presbyter in the Church of God deserves *punishment* and *disgrace* because he adopts opinions and sentiments on the subject of Church government which are received and acted upon by a large majority of Protestant Christians throughout the various divisions of the religious world! I cannot pause, my brother, to write the many denunciations that common sense, throughout an outraged community, will pronounce upon this OVERBEARING ACT OF ABANDONED TYRANNY! But I hasten to inquire, Why were *you* selected as the *victim*, the *sole* victim, when it was in proof before them that others were in the same condemnation? Why did not my lord of Canterbury, who ‘rides in the whirlwind and directs the storm’ among you, and by whom *even* bishops are tithed at will, together with the active and zealous doctor, the principal officer in his ‘star chamber,’ select a goodly number of victims, and offer an *appalling* hecatomb at once? Was it because Heaven had deprived you of health? Was it because you were remote from home and friends? Was it because, like your Master, you were poor, and with the humble sharer of your fortunes ‘had scarcely where to lay your head?’ Did they wish, by increasing your *mental* inquietude, to strengthen the desolation *without*, and so send you to a premature grave? Or was it intended by the *horror* of the example made of you, to say to other reformers, ‘If *you* have the *word*, *we* have the sword?’ I cannot refrain from asking where *three* or *four* members of the Baltimore Conference were during this LABOURED DEED OF HARD-EARNED INFAMY? Did they sit by in inglorious silence? But, my brother, be not discouraged; recollect that the great father of us all, as Methodists, was, by a similar body, and in the *same* city, forty years ago, declared unworthy of name or place in that communion in the bosom of which you now find yourself honourably degraded. When Mr. Wesley was informed of this, he declared in a letter, now in my possession, that the American bishop had ‘no more connexion with him.’ But I trust you will not so decide in relation to your blinded and prejudiced brethren—‘yet a little while,’ and this stupid, *laudean* zeal will be cooled in the humiliation and disgrace of your persecutors; public indignation will chastise their pitiful pretensions to *lordly* inquisition over the rights and consciences of those who have too much intelligence and too much candour to think and act by their prescription! To conclude, my dear sir, I beg you to accept the best wishes of a stranger; ‘faint not in the day of evil;’ the honorary overthrow you have sustained for the rights of conscience, will make strangers your friends: on hearing of the treatment you and others received at the Balti-

more Conference, ten or twelve persons within my charge have declared for *reform*, and are ready to aid you with their *influence* and *purses*. Wishing the speedy restoration of your health, and that you may live to see the curse of religious oppression banished from the Church and the world,—I remain yours in the kingdom and patience of *Jesus Christ*.

“April 27, 1827.

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—*Ibid.*, pp. 270, 271.

#### REMARKS.

The Virginia Conference, it seems, had refused to annul the verdict of an inferior Church judicatory, by which some of the disaffected members of the Church had been expelled. This was the unpardonable sin for which the author of “The Sovereignty of Methodism in the South” reviles them so bitterly. He sneers with ineffable contempt at the account, which he says an old-side brother took an early opportunity to give of the Virginia Conference, in the *Christian Advocate*. This “fine conference, with three bishops at its head,” is the object of the most bitter irony. The venerable Bishop M’Kendree concluded a very affectionate address to the conference, with an exhortation to holiness of life; and the conference, deeply affected with the importance of the subject, “adopted the following resolution:”—“That the doctrine of holiness, recommended by our Discipline, and forcibly impressed in the address of the bishop, be duly weighed and enforced by this conference.” This pious determination of the conference is most contemptuously sneered at by the writer, and he insinuates pretty clearly a suspicion that their pretended concern upon the subject of holiness and sanctification is only a “cloak for their sins.” To be sure, he does not positively say so; but no man of candour who reads his remarks will hesitate to say, that he intended his readers should make such an application of his innuendoes. He gives some Scripture quotations, by which he purposes to show what sanctification is *not*, but which really describes very wicked men; and all this with a sly insinuation that the members of the Virginia Conference sat for the picture. “It would be no matter of surprise,” he says, “*if the time should come, when a man would be ready to cut his brother’s throat in defence of the doctrine of Christian perfection. In what way our Virginia brethren intend to enforce the ‘doctrine of holiness,’ they have not explained: perhaps their conduct will hereafter explain it.*” And from the account he has given of these brethren, he leaves us everything to fear from their method of enforcing the doctrine! He declares, however, that “we [the reformers, we suppose] have no quarrel with our present bishops: we believe them to be good men;” at least, comparatively so, for they believe “*that none of them have become, by many degrees, so corrupted by this great ‘episcopacy’ as many of their tame underlings and dependants have become.*” What an exalted degree of good-

\* Rev. H. B. Bascom.

ness does he attribute to the bishops—they are not, *by many degrees*, as corrupt as their own tame underlings and dependants! The Methodist reader will perceive, by the last paragraph of the extract, an express avowal of the main object contemplated by the reformers. They are, he says, at war with the episcopacy, as the centre point of opposition. They had all along told us that they only wanted a local and lay representation in the General Conference!

The act of the Baltimore Conference which excited the wrath of Mr. Snethen and Vindex to such a tremendous height, was simply denominating the "Mutual Rights" "an improper periodical work," and requiring Mr. Dorsey, one of the preachers composing the conference, to cease from recommending and circulating it—which was nothing more than requiring him to desist from propagating slander. This, however, he not only refused to do, but after he had made a declaration of intentions and an avowal of sentiments totally inconsistent with his social relations and engagements to the Church, he concluded by the most cruel insult on the feelings of his brethren—"I have read the Mutual Rights, sir, for myself," said he, addressing the president, "*and think highly of the work, and recommend it to every member of this conference.*" The conference left Mr. Dorsey without an appointment for one year, and he forthwith betook himself to the pious work of circulating not only the "Mutual Rights," but Mr. M'Caine's "History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy." On the character of the latter work it would be useless to comment. Suffice it to say, that a deist, who had any respect for his character, would have been ashamed of writing it.

For this necessary measure towards Mr. Dorsey, Mr. Snethen calls the ministry who composed the Baltimore Annual Conference, "wolves"—and wolves too who are at war with the lamb-like harmlessness of the members of the Church—against whose ferocity there was no defence but by concealment—who had "all the teeth and all the claws, and therefore every man may be made to fear." He advises his brethren, therefore, to take refuge in the wisdom of the serpent, and conceal their movements. He himself, however, is above all such prudent measures. He had told us before that he was the leader of the mighty revolution which was in progress. "When he first began to write he had but one colleague." The reformers would be totally dismayed at the sight of *these* "TEETH AND CLAWS," if not encouraged by the voice of their captain. "I deem it proper, brethren, in this portentous change, in this state of our affairs, that you should hear my voice, should see my name. It will, I know it will—it must be asked, now the time is come to try men's souls, Where is Philopisticus? Where is Adynasius? Where is Senex? Where is the man who was among the foremost to challenge us to the cause of representation? Where is Snethen? I trust that while he is among the living



but one answer will be given to this question—he is at his post, he is in the front of the contest, he is shouting, *On, brethren, on!* And if he fall, it will be with a wound in his breast, and with his head direct towards the opponent.” He ought to have said *enemy*, as opponent is too mild an appellation for antagonists such as he describes—“wolves” with such formidable “teeth and claws!”

Vindex is not a writer to deal in figurative descriptions of the enemy. He was a late recruit, and proselytes often find it necessary to establish a reputation with their party, or to do away all suspicion of their sincerity, by manifesting extraordinary zeal for the common cause. He, therefore, does not mince the matter, but in the overflowings of his wrath denounces the conference as a *star-chamber court*. Our ministers of the Baltimore Annual Conference are, according to this writer, not only tyrants, but “overbearing,” “abandoned,” “infamous” tyrants.

We cannot comment on such language as this. It so outrages all decency as to set both criticism and commentary at defiance.

It may be, however, important to let the reader know what Dr. Jennings and his local-preacher associates in the Baltimore Union Society, who published these violent invectives and denunciations against our ministers, thought of them a few years ago, before he and his friends had become so effectually *reformed*. At the district (local-preachers) conference of 1820, the Rev. Dr. Jennings, James R. Williams, and William Kesley, were appointed “a committee to prepare and publish from the Journals, minutes of the district conference, accompanied with an address to the local preachers of the Baltimore District.” They performed their duty; and the address, signed by the above committee, contains the following high commendation of our ministry, and *the order of things* which then existed and which does still exist in our Church.

“Under the providence and grace of God, the Methodist Church is favoured with a ministry corresponding to the ORDER OF THINGS which prevailed in the days of THE PRIMITIVE SIMPLICITY AND POWER OF THE GOSPEL. Our itinerant elders and missionaries are called to make haste and spread the glad tidings of peace and good-will far and wide, as their work may direct, whilst we are expected to assist in building up and establishing them that believe, within the circle in which we move.”

All was right in 1820,—travelling preachers and local preachers, each occupying their proper stations in the Church, and both uniting in the good work of the gospel ministry! The Union Society was nevertheless formed in 1824, and the publication of the *Mutual Rights* commenced in August of the same year. The first volume of the work contains some of the most inflammatory of the preceding extracts, and the severest remarks on the itinerant ministry which in 1820 *corresponded to the order of things which prevailed in the days of the primitive simplicity and power of the gospel!*

## CONCLUSION.

The reader will bear in mind that the foregoing extracts are taken from a periodical called the "Mutual Rights;" that this periodical is published monthly by the Union Society of Baltimore, under the immediate superintendence of a committee elected annually by the society; and that the members of that society, as well as the editorial committee, were members of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Their membership in this Church was a voluntary act, to which they were in no way constrained, or even solicited, and could be renounced whenever they pleased. We have given only a small specimen of the bitter revilings and defamation published in their periodical against the pastors of our Church. The work consists of three octavo volumes, besides the monthly numbers from August last. No limits which we could reasonably prescribe to ourselves, would contain all the exceptionable matter to be found in this most extraordinary publication. We have, however, given enough to show the absurdity of the cry of persecution, which has been raised by those who have been held amenable to Christian discipline for their unfounded attacks upon the reputation of their brethren. It certainly cannot be pretended that they have been *persecuted for righteousness' sake*.

Our brethren who may have hastily made up their opinion against the proceedings of the Church in Baltimore, from the protests and other publications of the accused members, will now have an opportunity to review the whole affair, and cannot fail to perceive the fallacy of the allegation so often reiterated against us, that we persecuted these members of our Church in order to prevent investigation and suppress inquiry on the subject of reform. Dr. Jennings, in "an address intended, when written, to have been delivered before the district conference," not only repeats this stale and groundless allegation, but attempts to show that the publishers of the "Mutual Rights" are justified in speaking evil of ministers by the example of Mr. Wesley. He quotes, from Moore's Life of Wesley, instances, in which he says Mr. Wesley "exposed the conduct of the ministers of the Church of England, in a language as strong and pointed as any of the writers in the Mutual Rights have ever used in respect to any minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church." But in order that the example of Mr. Wesley in this particular should avail the doctor and his associates, it will be necessary for them to show that Mr. Wesley's allegations against those ministers of the Church of England were as unfounded as those made in the Mutual Rights against our ministry manifestly are. For, with due deference to the doctor's superior learning, to speak that which is TRUE is not "EVIL-SPEAKING," however severe it may be. Evil-speaking, according to the definitions of the word in Johnson

and Walker, means "slander," "defamation," "calumny." The doctor's defence, then, ought to have been a very different thing from what we find it. Instead of declaiming on reform, and the iniquity of endeavouring to prevent it, he should have set himself to prove the truth of the allegations made by him and his associates against our bishops and other ministers. If he had shown them to be true, the charge of "EVIL-SPEAKING" could not have been sustained, although injuring the reputation of another by publishing his faults or failings can only be justified by some apparent necessity for the disclosure. "And shall we," says the doctor, "accuse the author of the General Rules [Mr. Wesley] of speaking evil of ministers, because he there published the *truth* concerning those ministers who opposed themselves to hinder his work? I will not." No, indeed, nor we either: for the apostle Paul, who expressly enjoins it upon us, "to speak evil of no man;" and the apostle Peter, who exhorts us to "lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all *evil-speakings*," equally condemned the conduct of men of all ranks and conditions in life, in terms of very severe rebuke. If the doctor, then, can prove what has been alleged both against the living and the dead in the Mutual Rights, he will not only stand acquitted of "evil-speaking," but prove conclusively the necessity of a thorough reform, not only of our government, but of our morals. We confidently believe, however, that no attempt will ever be made to *substantiate* charges of such a heinous nature against the ministers of our Church.

May we not hope that even our brethren of the Queen Anne Union Society, who have scolded us so unmercifully, will, upon reading our statement and defence, come to have a better opinion of the Methodists in Baltimore? Perhaps they may yet do us the justice to believe, that we are as far as they can be from being "ready to expel a Christian from our society because he dissents from us in opinion upon Church government, or thinks proper to utter his dissent." We assure them, if such dissentients only confine themselves to truth in their statements, and keep within the bounds prescribed by the law of Christian charity in their remarks, we shall not question their right to inquire into the fitness and propriety of our ecclesiastical polity. We hope, moreover, that the learned judge who makes so conspicuous a figure in that association will interpose the ermine of justice in favour of our annual conference, whose case has been so hastily and severely condemned by that society. His honour will recollect that the cause was decided solely upon *ex-parte* testimony, and hence the verdict might, *à priori*, be suspected to be unjust. We have now, we think, adduced sufficient evidence to show that the Baltimore Annual Conference were not to blame for having denominated the Mutual Rights an "improper periodical work," nor for leaving Mr. D. B. Dorsey without a ministerial appointment, because he refused to desist from circu-

lating a work in which his brethren in the ministry were so mercilessly defamed and abused. We therefore pray, that his honour will please to grant a new trial.

When the Queen Anne's Union Society shall consent to review what they have said, both of the Church in Baltimore and of our annual conference, they will find a material discrepancy between their first and their last publication. We are told in the last, that "they [the travelling preachers] can do or say what they please against the Discipline or each other with impunity ; but if a local preacher or private member dare to say they are not immaculate, or do wrong, they are accused of speaking evil of ministers, and are tried and expelled : " but how will this declaration comport with their former address, in which they complain so bitterly of the proceedings against Mr. Dorsey, *a travelling preacher*, for circulating the Mutual Rights ? Surely both these complaints cannot be true, for they are directly contradictory. Again : they mention, among the good designs of the writers for the Mutual Rights, "that they laboured to show that our Church government was based on monarchical principles, and originated by our beloved founder, Mr. Wesley, before the declaration of independence." The declaration of independence *we believe* took place in July, 1776, and our Church government was instituted in December, 1784. Our brethren will not take it unkind, if, after we have called their attention to these oversights, we venture to suggest the necessity of keeping their matters better *posted up*, and of being more cautious and circumspect in pronouncing sentence upon their brethren. We shall at all times be thankful for their advice, and for reproof when deserved ; but we confess it would be more acceptable if it were given in better temper.

Justice requires us to admit, however, that our brethren of the Queen Anne's Union Society were, from their distance from the scene of these proceedings, liable to be imposed upon, and therefore we can readily excuse their misapprehensions of our motives and actions. But what shall we say of the committee appointed by the convention of reformers, (which met in Baltimore in November last,) "to inquire into the *alleged* grounds of the trials," &c., then going on in this station ? This committee say in their report, as adopted and published by the convention, that "from the evidence before your committee, it appears that the aforesaid local preachers have been suspended, and the lay members tried, and some of them expelled, *purely on the grounds of their holding dissent from, and publishing their objections to, some parts of the form of our Church government and its administration.* The committee do not deem it necessary to exhibit before the convention, in detail, the particulars of these trials, as the committee has not been able to obtain any information, contradicting the printed reports of these trials, in the hands of most, if not all, the members of this convention." Now we would ask, what

"*testimony*" this committee had "*before them?*" Was it not wholly ex-parte? Were not the "printed reports of these trials," of which they speak, the accounts which the accused themselves had published, in order to forestall public opinion? The committee had, it seems, been appointed to inquire into the "*alleged*" grounds of the trials—and surely whatever they might believe as to the *real* grounds, they have not given the grounds *alleged* for the prosecution. The charges and specifications which had been furnished to every one of the accused might have satisfied the committee of this fact: but if they had intended to fulfil the duties of their appointment, as set forth in the resolution of the convention, the means were within their reach. Those who preferred and sustained the charges, the committees who tried them, and even the pastor of the Church who presided at the trials, were at hand—but no inquiry was made of them. And why? They certainly were competent to say on what *alleged* grounds the trials had been predicated: but the committee might have obtained information in this way, which would not have suited their *purpose*. They therefore confined themselves to the testimony of the accused and expelled members themselves, and their report was shaped accordingly.\* It was, we suppose, on the authority of this report, that the convention said in their address, "Ministers have been suspended, members have been arraigned for trial, and an extraordinary combination systematically organized to break up the Union Society of the city of Baltimore; and all this has been done merely *because they have advocated in the Mutual Rights a lay representation in the legislative department of the Church.*" It is difficult to repress the indignation which necessarily arises from a view of such pitiful management as this. There is so much of electioneering trick and contrivance in the whole procedure—so obvious a design to get up something that might serve a party purpose where the truth may not be known—that we are ashamed to see it practised by men professing godliness; and we are still more humbled when we have to own this committee was composed of Methodists!—and of Methodist reformers too! We cannot admit the propriety of such measures even in political conflicts. Christians, we think, cannot be allowed to conform either to the spirit or practice of the world, even in civil contests for office or emolument; but if it cannot be prevented under such circumstances, we beseech our brethren to let neither the spirit nor practice come any farther—let them not pass within the veil of the holy sanctuary, the Church of God.

The vehement railings against our itinerant ministry, for not consenting to model our government according to the wishes of the reformers,

\* The members of the committee were "Brothers Willis Harris, of North Carolina; William Disney, of Ohio; William S. Stockton, of Philadelphia; Charles Avery, of Pittsburgh; and Nicholas Snethen, of Maryland."—*Proceedings of General Convention*, page 7.

are manifestly as unjust as they are cruel, reformers themselves being judges. They have told us again and again, that the members are not yet prepared for the change—that we are not yet sufficiently enlightened, either to appreciate its utility or to carry it into effect if it was granted. This is repeated in amount, more than once, by Mr. Shinn, and is responded by more than one other writer in the *Mutual Rights*. It will moreover appear, from the showing of reformers themselves, that at the last General Conference, among the very few members of the Church who petitioned for a change in the government, there existed great differences of opinion as to what that change ought to be. One of these differences was very important indeed, namely, whether the local preachers should be separately represented in the Conference, or be amalgamated with the laity. To prevent this discrepancy in their future petitions, has been one of the specious reasons assigned by reformers for organizing Union Societies.

Now it will not be denied, that our itinerant ministers found the Methodist Church government where it now is—in the hands of the ministry; and as the reformers tell them that the membership are unprepared for a change—as one in a hundred have never asked for it—and as those who did desire it, were not able to agree amongst themselves on a plan of reform—with what propriety can the travelling ministry be accused of oppression and tyranny, with withholding the rights of the laity, and lording it over God's heritage, for not having made the innovations contended for by the Union Society of Baltimore? The question now is, not whether the contemplated alterations be right or wrong. If we were to admit that nothing had been proposed but what might be justly claimed, yet the General Conference have never yet had an opportunity to act on the measure with a due regard to the wishes of the membership. The allegations, then, against the itinerant ministry are utterly unfounded, according to the showing of the Union Society themselves.

The master spirits who have so agitated our Church of late, cannot, however, claim the merit of originality, either for their pretensions or their measures. Mr. O'Kelly and Mr. Hammett preceded them in this country; and the following extract from D. Isaac's "*Liberty of the Pulpit defended*," page 24, will show that our brethren in England have passed through a similar conflict.

Mr. Isaac says, "A few turbulent spirits, some years ago, agitated the Methodist society—[in England.] The burden of their song was, that the preachers were tyrants, and the people suffering the most grievous oppression; that nothing could save the connexion but a new constitution, founded upon what they termed 'more liberal principles,' &c. The preachers, conscious of their own integrity, and of the attachment of the mem-

bers in general to the old plan, refused to concede what was so peremptorily demanded.

"The 'friends of the people,' as they were pleased to style themselves, *separated*, formed their new constitution, and invited the people to enter into the glorious liberty of the children of God. It turned out that about *one* in *eighteen* joined the new connexion, so that *one* was the people, and the other *seventeen* were nothing at all. Of those who left the old and joined the new connexion, a large proportion returned to the fold of Christ before two years had elapsed. History furnishes innumerable examples of this kind. The one had a right to withdraw if he felt dissatisfied, but he had no right to attempt the imposition of his new yoke upon the necks of his brethren."

Having thus given a faithful exhibit of the proceedings in relation to certain members of the Union Society in this city, together with the motives and reasons which impelled us to the measure, we venture to appeal to all our brethren, whether they be those who favour the opinion that the present organization of our Church polity ought to be essentially altered, or those who are opposed to such changes—whether they are itinerant preachers, local preachers, or laymen—provided they be friends of peace, lovers of God and the brethren—we appeal to them, we say, with confidence for the propriety, nay, for the necessity of the measures which the Church in Baltimore has pursued in relation to her offending members.

Mr. Wesley had told us, repeating it, perhaps, from one of the ancients, that as the soul and body made a man, so the spirit and discipline made Christians. It will be acknowledged that the Church had a choice of difficulties; she must permit her wholesome discipline, which had heretofore hedged in the fold, to be trampled down and destroyed, or she must lose a part of her members. The latter appeared to be by far the least evil of the two, and therefore was preferred.

We would put it to our brethren who favour reform, whether it ought to be effected by such means. What advantage would be reaped by the most salutary changes in our Church government, or by the establishment of a system of ecclesiastical polity which should be the wonder, the admiration and model of the Christian world, if, in the achievement, the character and the standing of your ministry should be destroyed?—if, in the party violence by which the revolution had been effected, the world had been taught to look on your travelling ministry as tyrants, whose power had been wrested from them by the people they had enslaved, by means as despicable as they were wicked? What access could such degraded ministers be expected to have to those whom they sought to call from error and sin, and what influence over those who should continue under their charge?

In political contests the government may be changed, and all who administer it may be dismissed from office, because the people can appoint new rulers and administrators; but we could not substitute our ministry, the great Head of the Church having reserved to himself the right to call and qualify the preachers of his gospel and the pastors of his Church.

We have now redeemed the pledge which we gave in an early stage of these proceedings, namely, that we would, after the proceedings should have terminated, publish a plain statement of the whole affair. We submit the statement to the consideration of our brethren here and elsewhere, with some anxiety, we confess, though not on our own account; for although it would be a source of great satisfaction to us to find we had acted so as to meet the approbation of our brethren generally, yet their censure cannot deprive us of the consolation we enjoy, from the consciousness of having been actuated by the purest motives, and the most sincere desire to promote and to secure the peace and prosperity of the Church. But we cannot repress the anxiety we feel for the verdict they shall give, because the interests of the whole Methodist Episcopal Church, and consequently the interests of the thousands who depend on her ministry for the word of life, are involved in the decision. If you sanction the violent measures of the Baltimore Union Society against our itinerant ministers,—if you are of opinion that the cruel imputations, and unfounded allegations, not only against those who have ceased from their labours and gone to their reward, but against those who now occupy their places and bear the ark of the Lord, ought to be permitted and suffered by the Church,—the time is come when we have nothing left us but to inscribe “*ICHABOD*” on the institutions of Methodism—institutions which have carried the light of truth into the dreary abodes of darkness and sin, and by which the primitive design of preaching the gospel to the poor has been so successfully accomplished: then, indeed, the glory will have departed from Israel. “*But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak.*”

We are your brethren in the bonds of a peaceful gospel.

GEORGE EARNEST,  
JACOB ROGERS,  
ISAAC N. TOY,  
SAMUEL HARDEN,  
ALEXANDER YEARLEY,  
JOHN BERRY,  
FIELDER ISRAEL.

BALTIMORE, *February 4, 1828.*



P. S.—The reader will please to notice the following correction:—

In page 81, the six laymen from whom the several committees of trial were constituted are called a “committee,” which might lead the reader to suppose they all served in each case; this, however, was not the fact. The several committees consisted occasionally of three, but for the most part of five members—never of six.

## MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES.

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REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS, ADOPTED BY THE  
GENERAL CONFERENCE, 1823.

ANNOTATIONS ON THE PRECEDING REPORT.

REMARKS ON DR. JENNINGS'S "REVIEW OF THE METHODIST MAGAZINE AND  
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REVIEW OF THE REFORM CONTROVERSY.

TO THE PUBLIC.     •



## MISCELLANEOUS ARTICLES.

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### REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS, ADOPTED BY THE GENERAL CONFERENCE, 1828.

MR. EDITOR,—The report of the committee on petitions and memorials, adopted by the General Conference at its late session in Pittsburg, Pa., has been so grossly misrepresented by our enemies, that we are induced to request you to republish it with the addition of a few notes. It is a very valuable document, in which the committee have evinced a clear comprehension of the subject submitted to their consideration, and in which they have given a condensed but perspicuous view of the leading principles of our ecclesiastical polity. The arguments, or rather the sophistry upon which the claims of the revolutionists rest, are met by reasoning so cogent and so clear that it has not been, and we venture to say it will not be, refuted, though there has been no want of either industry or ingenuity in the many writers by whom it has been assailed.

The committee who penned and the Conference who adopted the report have been attacked with a fierceness and vindictiveness of vituperation, sufficiently indicative of the utter despair into which their adversaries were thrown by the arguments they could not answer, and the facts which it was vain to deny. As the report could not be successfully met by fair argument, a shameful resort has been had to a direct and wilful misrepresentation of its language and meaning. The cause of the party was to be sustained, whatever became of truth and fair dealing. Accordingly we find the assailants first giving their own conceptions of the meaning of the Conference without quoting from the report. These are followed by others of their party quoting the words of the first writers as the language of the report itself; and having made the Conference say what they pleased, they hold up to ridicule, not the principles or doctrines avowed in the report, but “the man of straw” which had been created by their own morbid imaginations.

You have stated in your prospectus, that the "Itinerant" was not intended for aggression, but for defence ; and it is to defend the supreme council of our Church from unjust aspersion, and the principles they have avowed from misrepresentation, that we solicit the use of your columns.

## REPORT

*Of the Committee on Petitions and Memorials, adopted by the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church at its late session in Pittsburg, Pa., May, 1828.\**

"The committee to whom were referred certain petitions and memorials, for and against a direct lay and local representation in the General Conference, submit the following report :—

"Of those which propose this revolution in our economy, that which has been received from a convention of certain local preachers and lay members, held in the city of Baltimore in November last, is presumed to embody the general views of those who desire this change, and the chief arguments on which they rely. In framing a reply, in the midst of the various and pressing business of a General Conference, it cannot be reasonably expected that we should enter into minute details. Our remarks, of necessity, must be confined to a few leading topics, in a condensed, yet, we trust, an intelligible form.

"As to the claim of *right* to the representation contended for, if it be a right which the claimants are entitled to *demand*, it must be either a natural or an acquired right. If a natural right, then, being founded in nature, it must be common to men, as men. The foundation of rights in ecclesiastical bodies, in our opinion, rests on a different basis. If it be alleged to be an acquired right, then it must have been acquired either in consequence of becoming Christians or of becoming Methodists. If the former, it devolves on the claimants to prove that this right is conferred by the Holy Scriptures, and that they impose on us the corresponding obligation to grant the claim. That it is not 'forbidden' in the New Testament is not sufficient ; for neither is the contrary 'forbidden.' Or if the latter be alleged—namely, that it has been acquired in consequence of becoming Methodists—then it must have been either by some conventional compact or by some obligatory principle in the economy of Methodism, to which, as then organized, the claimants voluntarily attached themselves. Neither of these, we believe, either has been or can be shown. And until one at least of these be shown, the claim of *right*, as such, cannot, we think, have been sustained.

\* This report, we believe, was adopted by the General Conference without a dissenting vote.

“But do the memorialists mean to say that they are entitled to their claim as a matter of right, against the judgment and the voice of a confessedly very large majority of their brethren, both of the ministry, traveling and local, and also of the lay members? or that in these circumstances, on any ground, the claim ought to be admitted? We could not have believed them capable of so strange a position, had they not declared the opinion as prevailing among themselves, ‘that the extension of the principle of representation to the members and the local preachers of the Church by the General Conference, in compliance with a petition of this kind, *at this conjuncture of time*, would do more toward conciliating good feeling, restoring lost confidence among brethren, and confirming wavering minds, on all sides, than any other measure which can be adopted.’

“Now *we* ‘speak advisedly’ when we say, that, in our judgment, such a measure, ‘at this conjuncture of time,’ would have a precisely contrary effect. The ministers assembled in General Conference, coming so recently from all parts of the great field of our missionary labours, and having had throughout its whole extent free and constant intercourse both with traveling and local preachers, and also with our lay members, are, certainly, at least as well prepared as the memorialists could have been to form a correct judgment on this point; and their calm and deliberate judgment is clearly and unhesitatingly as above stated. This we believe, too, to be the true state of the question, after it has been so zealously discussed on the side of the memorialists for now nearly eight years, during almost the whole of which time, until very recently, the discussion has been conducted almost exclusively by their own writers.

“We are aware that it has been assumed, by some at least of those writers, that this repugnance to the change proposed, on the part of so great a proportion both of our local preachers and lay members, to say nothing of the itinerant preachers, is the result of ignorance or want of intellect. This we conceive to be at least not a very modest assumption. Our opinion, on the contrary, is, while we freely admit that there are men of respectable information and intelligence who desire the change, that there are, nevertheless, very many more, of at least equally respectable information and intelligence, who are opposed to it, whether on the ground of right, of consistent practicability, or of utility.

“With regard to our local brethren particularly, it is our decided judgment that the privileges and advantages in which they have participated, in this country, have much rather exceeded than fallen short of what was contemplated in their institution, in the original economy of Methodism, as founded by the venerable Wesley, either in Europe or in America. We cannot but regret to perceive, that the addition of privilege to privilege seems only to have had the effect of exciting some of our brethren to claim still more and more, and now to begin to demand them as matters

of positive and inherent right. We are happy to be able to say 'some' only of our local brethren; for of the great body, even of themselves, we believe better things, though we thus speak. If, indeed, our members generally are tired of our missionary and itinerant system, and wish a change, then we could not be surprised if they should desire to introduce into our councils local men, whose views, and feelings, and interests, in the very nature and necessity of things, could not fail to be more local than those of itinerant men. And if to so powerful a local influence should be added, as would be added, the tendencies and temptations to locality which, in despite of all our better convictions, too often exist among ourselves, from domestic and personal considerations of a pressing character, we are free to confess our fears of the dangers to our itinerant economy which, in our opinion, could not fail, in time, to be the result. Now the preservation of the great itinerant system, unimpaired, in all its vital energies, we do conscientiously believe to be essential to the accomplishment of the grand original design of the economy of Methodism, to spread Scriptural holiness over these and other lands.

"The memorialists, we know, disavow any intention or desire to impair those energies, or to injure this system. Be it so. They can, however, only speak for themselves. They know not what may be the views of those who may come after them. And, in any event, our argument is, that the change proposed would, in its very nature, and from the inevitable connexions of causes and effects, tend gradually perhaps, yet not the less uncontrollably, to the results which we have mentioned.

"We know also that it has been insinuated that we adhere to the continuance of our present polity from motives of personal interest. For protection against such unkindness and injustice we rest on the good sense and candour of the community. It cannot but be well known that our present economy bears with a peculiar severity upon the personal and domestic comforts of the itinerant ministry. And even an enemy could scarcely fail to admit that were we really ambitious of worldly interest, and of personal ease and domestic comfort, we might have the discernment to perceive that the surest way to effect these objects would be to effect the changes proposed, and thus to prepare the way for the enjoyment of similar advantages, in these respects, to those now enjoyed by the settled ministry of other Churches. And, indeed, were such a change effected, and should we even still continue itinerant, considering that, from the necessity of things, our wealthy and liberal friends would most generally be selected as delegates, we do not doubt that the change proposed might probably tend to increase our temporal comforts. We think this the more probable, because, if such a direct representation of the laity were admitted, their constituents might ultimately become obliged, by some positive provisions, fully to make up and pay whatever allowances

might be made to the ministry ; which allowances, in this event, might also more properly acquire the nature of a civil obligation. At present our economy knows no such thing. The great Head of the Church himself has imposed on us the duty of preaching the gospel, of administering its ordinances, and of maintaining its moral discipline among those over whom the Holy Ghost, in these respects, has made us overseers. Of these also—namely, of gospel doctrines, ordinances, and moral discipline—we do believe that the divinely-instituted ministry are the divinely-authorized expounders ; and that the duty of maintaining them in their purity, and of not permitting our ministrations, in these respects, to be authoritatively controlled by others, does rest upon us with the force of a moral obligation, in the due discharge of which our consciences are involved. It is on this ground that we resist the temptations of temporal advantage which the proposed changes hold out to us.

“ On this point we beg, however, that no one may either misunderstand or misrepresent us. We neither claim nor seek to be ‘ lords over God’s heritage.’ In the sense of this passage, there is but one Lord and one Lawgiver. We arrogate no authority to enact any laws of our own, either of moral or of civil force. Our commission is to preach the gospel, and to enforce the moral discipline, established by the one Lawgiver, by those spiritual powers vested in us, as subordinate pastors, who watch over souls as they that must give an account to the chief Shepherd. We claim no strictly-legislative powers, although we grant that the terms ‘ legislature ’ and ‘ legislative ’ have been sometimes used even among ourselves. In a proper sense, however, they are not strictly applicable to our General Conference. A mistake on this point has probably been the source of much erroneous reasoning, and of some consequent dissatisfaction. Did we claim any authority to enact laws to affect either life or limb, to touch the persons or to tax the property of our members, they ought, unquestionably, to be directly represented among us. But they know we do not. We certainly, then, exercise no civil legislation. As to the moral code, we are subject, equally with themselves, to one only Lord. We have no power to add to, to take from, to alter, or to modify a single item of his statutes. Whether laymen or ministers be the authorized expounders and administrators of those laws, we can confidently rely on the good Christian sense of the great body of our brethren to judge. These well know, also, that whatever expositions of them we apply to others, the same are applied equally to ourselves, and, in some instances, with peculiar strictness.

“ No man is obliged to receive *our doctrines* merely because *we* believe and teach them, nor unless they have his own cordial assent. Neither is any man obliged to submit himself to what *we* believe to be the *moral discipline* of the gospel, and our duty to enforce, unless he believes it to be



so also. In this view, at least, it cannot require any great share of either intelligence or candour to perceive some difference between our spiritual and pastoral oversight and the absolute sway of the ancient 'Druids,' and of the despots of 'Babylon and Egypt,' and of 'India and Tartary.' The subjects of their lawless power became so not by choice, but by birth. Neither had they the means, whatever might have been their desire, of escaping its grasp. Even in more modern days, and under governments comparatively free, the right of expatriation, without the consent of the government, has been denied. We do not subscribe to this doctrine, if applied to either Church or State. The right of ecclesiastical expatriation, from any one branch of the Christian Church to any other which may be preferred, for grave causes, we have never denied. Nor can we keep, nor are we desirous to keep, any man subject to our authority one moment longer than it is his own pleasure. We advert to this topic with great reluctance, but the memorialists compel us. If they will cease to compare us to despots, to whom we bear no analogy, we shall cease to exhibit the obvious distinction. Till then it is our duty to repel the imputation, so obstructive of our ministry. Expatriation, either civil or ecclesiastical, if we may continue this application of the term, may be painful, and attended with sacrifices. But we should certainly think it preferable to perpetual internal war. If our brethren can live in peace with us, in Christian bonds, we shall sincerely rejoice, and be cordially happy in their society and fellowship. But we entreat them not to keep us embroiled in perpetual strife. Our united energies are needed for higher and nobler purposes.

"We have been repeatedly told, in effect, that the doctrines, the moral discipline, and the peculiar Christian privileges of class-meetings, love-feasts, &c., in the Methodist Episcopal Church, are approved and esteemed, by the various memorialists themselves, above those of any other branch of the Christian Church. Does it not then clearly follow, by their own admission, that, with all the faults of our government, this state of things has been preserved and maintained under the peculiar administrations of our itinerant system? And who will undertake to say that, under a gracious Providence, which has thus led us on, this has not, in a great measure at least, been the result of the distinctness of our polity from that of most other Churches? And who will undertake to say that, were the changes proposed adopted, we should not gradually, though at first perhaps almost imperceptibly, begin to go the way of others? We speak to Methodists. They will judge what we say. The moral results of our past and present polity have been tried. Its fruits are before us, and confessed by the world. The experiment proposed, in connexion with an essentially-itinerant system, is untried. Its results, at best, must be problematical; and in our opinion, there is no prospect of gain that can justify the hazard.

"With regard to our local brethren particularly, they have themselves

explicitly said, that they 'ask for no distinct representation of the local preachers.' So far as this question is concerned, therefore, by their own consent, they can only be regarded as amalgamated with the laity: and our lay brethren, we apprehend, would not readily consent to its being considered in any other light.

"Were we disposed to retort the insinuation of sinister personal motives, how easy would it be for us to suggest that some of our local brethren who have deserted the itinerant field, (perhaps from its toils and privations,) and others who have never been pleased to leave *domestic* comforts and temporal pursuits to encounter its labours and sacrifices, may be so zealous in accomplishing the proposed change in order to cut up, or to bring down, the itinerant system to a nearer approximation to their temporal convenience; so that, in time, they might come, without the sacrifices at present necessary, to participate both in the pastoral charge, and, alas! in the envied pittance of those who now devote themselves wholly to the work, and are absolutely dependant for daily subsistence on the mere voluntary contributions of those whom they serve: (a check on their power indeed!) Such an imputation would be quite as kind and as true as many of those which are so liberally heaped on us. This course of argumentation, however, we deem unworthy of Christian brethren, and shall leave it for those who think their cause requires it. The man who can believe, or who can endeavour to persuade others, that we adhere to our present itinerant system for the sake of personal convenience, ease, or interest, or with the view of benefitting our posterity more than the posterity of our brethren, may be pitied, but he places himself beyond the reach either of reasoning or of rebuke.

"The memorialists were sensible that 'a plan' of their proposed changes had been urgently called for, and seem to have been well aware that rational and conscientious men could not feel free to enter upon so great a revolution, in a system of such extent and of such connexions, without a plan, clearly and frankly developed, and bearing the marks of having been carefully and judiciously devised. The memorialists, indeed, say, that, 'independently of other considerations,' they were 'disposed to avoid the attempt to form a plan, out of deference to the General Conference.' It would have been more satisfactory to us to have known what those 'other considerations' were. From some other circumstances, we cannot but apprehend that they probably had more influence in keeping back the exposé of 'a plan' than the one mentioned here, of—'deference to the General Conference.' On our part, we frankly confess ourselves incompetent to form any satisfactory plan, on any principles which we believe to be equal and efficient, and consistent with the energies and greatest usefulness of our extended missionary system. We think it, therefore, unreasonable, at least, to ask of *us* to contrive 'a plan.'

“So far as we can judge from any experiment that has been made in Europe or in America, we cannot perceive any great advantages which could be promised to the Church from the proposed change. Nor has the late convention in Baltimore afforded to our understanding any additional argument for its efficient practicability. Agreeably to the journal of that convention, one hundred persons were appointed to attend it, of whom fifty-seven only did attend, namely, from the State of New-York, one; North Carolina, two; Ohio, four; District of Columbia, four; Pennsylvania, seven; Virginia, ten; and Maryland, twenty-nine. Now that convention had been urgently called, by repeated public advertisements, and was expected to be held but a few days to discuss subjects represented as of great importance and deep interest. Liberal invitations were given, and comfortable and free accommodations pledged. Yet, notwithstanding the novelty of the assembly, the pleasantness of the season, and other inviting circumstances, a very few more than one half of the whole number appointed attended. And had it required two-thirds of that number to constitute a quorum, as in our General Conference, after all their labour and expense, no business could have been done, for there would have been no quorum. Of the number that did attend, too, it will be perceived that a majority of the whole were from the State of Maryland, within which the convention was held; and, including the neighbouring District of Columbia, a decisive majority. This exhibits a practical proof that, were a lay delegation even admitted, the consequence would be, that the extremities of our Church would not be, in fact, represented at all, but would be subjected to the overwhelming control of those within the vicinity of the seat of the Conference; a state of things which, we believe, is not desirable. This may serve also, perhaps, to account, in some measure, for the great zeal which some of our brethren have exhibited in this cause, particularly in the State of Maryland and the adjoining district, and in the city of Baltimore, where the General Conference has usually been held. Were it established that the General Conference should always be held in St. Louis or New-Orleans, or any other remote part, we cannot but think that the zeal of some, in that case, would probably be very much abated. Even they would scarcely be willing to travel so great a distance, at so much expense and loss of time, to remain three or four weeks at a General Conference.

“In another document, issued by the convention above alluded to, they say, ‘We have been labouring with great attention and perseverance to put the public in possession of our views as fast as we can.’ They have also had in circulation for many years a monthly periodical publication, for the express purpose of diffusing their views and advocating their cause, besides the institution of what have been called Union Societies, and of late a convention. Yet, after all these exertions, the great body of our

ministers, both travelling and local, as well as of our members, perhaps not much if any short of one hundred to one, still oppose their wishes. This, as before said, has been assumed to be from ignorance or want of intellect, or from some worse principle. But we believe it to be the result of a firm and deliberate attachment to our existing institutions and economy—an attachment which we have the happiness of believing to be increased, rather than diminished, in proportion to the development of the *details* of any *plans* which the memorialists have yet seen fit to exhibit. We put it, then, to the good sense, to the Christian candour, and to the calmer and better feelings of our brethren, whether it be not time to cease to agitate and disturb the Church with this controversy?—at least, if it must be continued, whether it be not time to divest it of that acrimony and virulence which, in too many instances, we fear, has furnished fit matter for the scoff of the infidel and the reproach of common enemies? If this state of things be continued, how can it be said, ‘See how *these* Christians love one another?’ It grieves us to think of it. We weep between the porch and the altar; and our cry is, ‘Spare, O Lord! spare thy people, and give not thine heritage to *this* reproach.’

“We know that we have been charged with wishing to suppress free inquiry, and with denying to our ministers and members the liberty of speech and of the press. Our feelings, under such reiterated and widely-circulated charges, would tempt us to repel them with strong expressions. If reviled, however, we are resolved not to revile again. But the charge we wholly disavow. Our ministers and members, of every class, are entitled to the full liberty of speech and of the press, equally with any other citizens of the United States, subject solely to the restrictions and responsibilities imposed by the laws of the land, by the obligations of Christianity, and by the existing regulations under which we are voluntarily associated, as Methodists and as Methodist ministers. The rule in our Discipline, ‘sec. vii, p. 91,’ [new edition, p. 88,] of which some of the memorialists complain, never was intended (and we are not aware that it has at any time been officially so construed) to suppress such freedom of inquiry, or to deny such liberty of speech and of the press; provided such inquiry be conducted, and such liberty be used, in a manner consistent with the above-mentioned obligations. The design of the rule was to guard the peace and union of the Church against any mischievous false brethren, who might be disposed to avail themselves of their place in the bosom of the Church to *endeavour to sow dissensions*, by *inveighing* against our doctrines or discipline, in the sense of unchristian railing and violence. Any other construction of it we have never sanctioned, nor will we. In this view of this rule we cannot consent to its abolition. On the contrary, we regard it as a Christian and useful rule, and particularly necessary, at the present time, for the well-being of the Church. It is

aimed against *licentiousness* and not against liberty. In the State, as well as in the Church, it is found necessary to subject both speech and the press to certain legal responsibilities, which undoubtedly operate as restraints, and tend to guard against licentiousness, by exposing offenders to penalties corresponding to the extent of their *abuse* of liberty. And we confess ourselves among the number of those who, with statesmen and jurists, as well as divines, maintain that even a despotic government is preferable to a state of unbridled anarchy.

“By insinuations of the above description, and by others of an analogous character, attempts have been made to excite against us the jealousy and suspicion of statesmen and politicians, and of the constituted authorities of the civil government. This low stratagem we have always regarded as peculiarly deserving the rebuke of every generous mind, even among our opponents: and we cannot believe otherwise than that it had its origin either in some distempered mind or some perverted heart. The memorialists wish the government of the Church to be assimilated to that of the State. We think, on the other hand, that as there neither is nor ought to be any connexion between Church and State, so neither is there any obligation or necessity to conform the government of the one to that of the other: that both their origin and their objects differ; and that to aim at conforming them to each other would be more likely, in the course of human events, to terminate in their amalgamation, than the course of denying such analogy, and maintaining the two jurisdictions on their peculiarly-distinctive bases, under regulations adapted to the objects for which they were severally designed. In the instances of civil and religious despotism alluded to by the memorialists, as recorded in history, the powers of Church and State were combined, and no means were left to the people of appealing or of escaping from the one or from the other. The first step towards producing such a state of things would be to bring ministers of religion and officers of State into a nearer alliance with each other, and thus gradually to effect an assimilation of views, and feelings, and interests. The way being thus prepared, politicians and statesmen might be introduced into our ecclesiastical councils, and, by a ‘mutual’ combination, aid each other in the accumulation of power and influence. We do not affirm that any of the memorialists seriously meditate such designs. But we do say, that, according to our understanding of the natural tendency of things, the change proposed is just such a one as would be most likely to be adopted by men of *policy* for the accomplishment of such an object; and that, in the present state of the world, nothing would be more impolitic than the continuance of our present economy with any such ambitious schemes in view as some, we fear, and must say, have malevolently insinuated.

“With regard to what have been called ‘Union Societies,’ we consider the organization of these distinct bodies within the bosom of the Church

as the baneful source of the principal evils which of late have so painfully afflicted and distracted some portions of our charge. Such associations, within the pale of the Church, have arrayed and combined all the workings of the spirit of party in their most pernicious and destructive forms. They have drawn a line of separation between those who compose them and their brethren, as organized and systematic adversaries. They have separated chief friends; they have severed the most sacred and endearing ties; and have caused and fomented discord and strife in circles before distinguished for peace and love. And under whatever plausible pretexts they may have been instituted, the Church generally, we believe, has regarded them as calculated, if not designed, either to obstruct the due administration of discipline, by overawing the administration of it, or to prepare an organized secession, in case they should fail in modelling the Church according to their wishes. With these associations numbers, we have no doubt, unwarily became connected at first, from various views, who now feel a difficulty in disentangling themselves. If, however, the real object of their original institution was to secure an identity of views in the communications to be presented to this General Conference, that object having been now accomplished, we affectionately and respectfully submit it to the peaceably-disposed among our brethren who may yet compose them, whether there can yet be any remaining obligation to continue in them; and whether, in fact, they ought not now to be dissolved. In our opinion, considering what have been their past operation and effects, the general peace of the Church can never be restored and settled on any firm and lasting basis till this shall be done.

“We might add much more, but the time fails us. We entreat our brethren to be at peace. It is our earnest and sincere desire. In order to it, on our part, we have advised, and do hereby advise and exhort, all our brethren, and all our ecclesiastical officers, to cultivate on all occasions the meekness and gentleness of Christ; and to exercise all the lenity, moderation, and forbearance which may be consistent with the purity of our institutions, and the due and firm administration of necessary discipline, the sacrifice of which we could not but deem too costly, even for peace.

“In conclusion, we say to brethren, ‘If there be, therefore, any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye our joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let the peace of God rule in our hearts, to the which also we are called in one body; and let us be thankful. Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and any praise, let us think on *these* things. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil-speaking be put away from us, with all malice. And may the God of love and peace be with us.’”

# ANNOTATIONS ON THE PRECEDING "REPORT."

## NOTE I.

THE memorialists had promised to "*take an argumentative view of this question, (of right,) in a form somewhat different from those which had become most familiar, and which had been frequently found to fail to convince individuals.*" The claim, it seems, had failed to be sustained by "familiar" arguments—that is, by common sense; and the new "argumentative views" were to be borrowed by the claimants from far-fetched and absurd analogies. It is contended by the memorialists, that absolute monarchies, hierarchies, and aristocracies, have deprived their subjects of their rights; and that, *therefore*, the Methodist Episcopal Church has deprived its members of their rights! But the "therefore," must obviously be a *non sequitur*, unless the memorialists can show that the Methodist Church is a monarchy, a hierarchy, or an aristocracy, which certainly cannot be done, without confounding the most obvious distinctions.

The travelling ministry neither claim nor exercise any arbitrary authority over the locality or membership. The authority they exercise is purely pastoral, and they do not obtain it without the consent and recommendation of the laity and local preachers. None are subjected to their authority but such as have voluntarily put themselves under it, and who can release themselves from it whenever they please. The pastors, moreover, are dependant upon the voluntary contributions of their flocks for their subsistence. How absurd is it, then, to compare this ministerial superintendence with the despotisms, either civil or ecclesiastical, which at any time have been established in the world! The despotisms to which the memorialists have adverted, would lose all their terrors, if deprived of the purse and the sword. If no person could come under their domination, but by choice—if their subjects could renounce their allegiance when they pleased—and if, while they acknowledged allegiance, they held their rulers in check, by keeping them in absolute dependence upon the bounty of their subjects for the necessities of life, there would be little to complain of, even in the absolute monarchies, hierarchies, and aristocracies, to which the complainants have alluded.

But all the sophistry of the memorialists is met by the Conference with a plain, common-sense refutation; the most vexatious thing, by-the-by, which can possibly be thrown in the way of a sophist or a would-be metaphysical philosopher. If the memorialists have an abstract right to representation in the General Conference, it must be either a natural or an

acquired right. The reader, we presume, never heard of any other right. To which, then, of these two kinds of right does the claim belong? If it be a natural right, it belonged to them in a state of nature, while they were yet enemies to God by wicked works, and aliens to the commonwealth of Israel. Nay, more, if it be a natural right, it belongs, as the report alleges, "to men as men;" consequently, to all men: and the monstrous absurdity will follow, that every man, in the United States at least, is entitled to be represented in the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.

But is it an acquired right? If it is, *when* was it acquired? Did they acquire this right by becoming Christians? Then it must be conferred and defined by the Holy Scriptures, the great charter of Christianity. Let this be shown, and we will neither resist it, nor reason about it, but yield to that authority the most prompt and unqualified submission. This, however, is not *now* pretended. The memorialists themselves did not urge their claims as founded upon Scripture warrant. On the contrary, it is now generally admitted, that the Scriptures have not enjoined any particular and exclusive form of Church government; and, consequently, that any associated body of Christians have a right to institute such a form as they may find best adapted to the circumstances in which they may have been providentially placed.

The absurdity of the claim, as a right acquired by the profession of Christianity, is moreover rendered sufficiently obvious by the consequences which would follow the admission of such a principle. It would necessarily follow from it, that the other denominations of Christians, as well as Methodists, have a right to be represented in the General Conference of our Church; as a right common to Christians must appertain to all Christian sects and denominations!

But if the right does not appertain to the common profession of Christianity, was it acquired by becoming Methodists? That it was not, is obvious from the fact, that it is nowhere found in the terms and conditions to which we consented when we became Methodists. It is not contained in our book of government and discipline. The absence of such a recognition of this supposed right, is the very subject of complaint with the memorialists; and therefore could not have been already provided for by any previous conventional compact or agreement. "The rights which a local preacher or layman possesses, as such, are purely conventional. They are not natural, but acquired rights; and they are known and determined by the articles of association contained in our book of discipline and government. The Church is a voluntary association, entered into for religious purposes. Whoever enters into its communion, is entitled to all the privileges and immunities which the articles of association hold out to him—and to no more. If he find upon experiment, that the religious



advantages he acquires do not compensate him for the sacrifices he is required to make, he has an indefeasible right to withdraw from the community, and thereby release himself from the obligations imposed by his membership—but he has no right to demand of the Church to change her economy for his accommodation.”

The arguments of the Conference have not been fairly met by our adversaries—they cannot be refuted; for they are founded upon the immutable principles of truth. The opposition have attempted to evade their force by all the subtlety of metaphysical sophistry; and like people dancing a minuet, they have always left off where they began. For want of argument, they have next resorted to ridicule—they have jeered and laughed, and no doubt persuaded themselves that they were exceedingly witty; but, after all, the positions taken by the Report remain unmoved and immovable. The rights claimed must be either natural or acquired, or they are no rights at all; and that they are neither the one nor the other, is too obvious to require any further argument or illustration.

Somebody in the Mutual Rights has inquired whether the rights of the travelling preachers are natural or acquired; and if acquired, When was it done? The question has been anticipated and answered: “The government of the Methodist Episcopal Church *originated* with the ministry, and the lay members voluntarily entered into the association under the regulations made by Mr. Wesley and his successors,—the *right* to make new regulations or to alter the old ones, being reserved to the preachers in the very terms of the compact. The preachers, therefore, existed, in fact, before the people or lay members of the Church. The government was *originally* and of *necessity*, in their hands, and we were by them invited to the privileges provided for us in the economy they had instituted. They cannot, therefore, be charged with the assumption of a power which does not legitimately belong to them; for it is no other power than has been virtually conceded to them by every one who has entered into the connexion and become a party to the original compact.” In short, the authority exercised by the itinerant preachers over the membership, is not of natural inherent right, but has been acquired by the voluntary consent of every individual member of the Church.

It must be a subject of regret to all who are interested in the peace and prosperity of Zion, that the question of altering our Church economy was ever made to turn upon *abstract rights*, rather than upon the *UTILITY* of the changes proposed. The whole family of Methodists having but one common interest—namely, the spread of the gospel in the world and the increase of holiness amongst ourselves—the question to be considered, both by preachers and members, obviously was: *What may be done to promote these great objects?* And if it were found that there were any defects either in our economy or in the administration of it, which had rendered,

or were likely to render, our mutual efforts less successful than they might be made, it would have been easy to apply or to originate the remedy. Thus, if upon due consideration it had been found that the introduction of a lay or local delegation into our General Conference, would increase our usefulness to others and promote evangelical piety among ourselves, all the members would have united in the amendment, and the preachers could have had no interest, either temporal or spiritual, in opposing it; for in both respects their interests are essentially connected with the prosperity of the membership. It could not indeed have been expected or desired, that the proposition should have at first met the approbation of all, either of the preachers or members. It is wise, perhaps, always to examine with jealousy and strict scrutiny, innovations which propose fundamentally to change systems long established, and which in their operation have been productive of extensive benefit,—which have become familiar by usage, and sanctified by associations and feelings which cannot be transferred, and which are not easily obliterated or subdued. But all that would have been necessary to final success, would have been to suggest a plan of the proposed constitution, in all its details, and to have examined it, not only as a whole, but in all its parts, with reference to its application to the particular circumstances, habits, and objects of the Methodist community. The different views of those who turned their attention to the subject, would have been thus elicited. The whole amount of wisdom and experience in the connexion would have been brought to bear upon the subject; whatever was imperfect in the plan would have been supplied, and whatever was unnecessary or dangerous would have been given up. Untrammelled by the metaphysical speculations of either civilians or theologians, but keeping steadily in view the utility and practicability of the changes proposed, we should finally have adopted a better system, or have generally agreed to continue our present polity. We had hoped, at one time, that this course would have been taken. This hope was founded upon a memorial sent up to the General Conference of 1824, by a very large meeting of the male members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore city station, which was voted for by most, if not all, the leading reformers in the place. In this memorial it was admitted that no good government, whether civil or ecclesiastical, was ever founded upon the abstract principles of natural rights; that the only basis upon which government could safely rest, was the broad ground of expediency; and the memorial went on to show the opinion of the meeting, as to the expediency of a lay delegation. Immediately after the adjournment of Conference, however, the ground was changed. A periodical publication was announced; and to show the new principles upon which the reformers were determined to act, the paper was called “*The Mutual Rights of the Ministers and Members,*” &c.

The periodical was conducted in conformity with the principles then avowed. The expediency of a lay and local delegation was no longer considered or discussed; and even the practicability of the measure, consistently with the union, harmony, and efficiency of an itinerant ministry, was kept entirely out of view. The discussion was confined to the abstract right of representation immediately from the people, in what they were pleased, however improperly, to style the *legislative* department of the Church; and, of course, all the members who opposed the scheme were represented as venal slaves, and the panders to power; while the preachers, who declined to introduce an innovation not sanctioned by five in a hundred of the membership, were denounced as tyrants and despots; nay, as "overbearing abandoned tyrants," who "would rather see their flocks go into sin, and finally into hell, than to grant them their rights." All the evil consequences which have resulted from the controversy, have grown out of this unfortunate change of principle. The claim of right could not be sustained by those who advocated it; but it furnished them with an opportunity to ring the changes upon those political principles which are so deservedly popular among us, without feeling, at the same time, under the necessity of showing their application to the subject they professed to discuss. They were *republicans*. The people of this country were republicans, and would sustain them in the demand for a republican Church government, right or wrong; and the Church was arraigned before the tribunal of the world to answer for her economy.

We remembered, however, that Robespierre, Danton, and Marat, were professedly *furious* republicans; and when they and their confederates had, by incessantly distracting the people with their abstract principles of political philosophy, defeated the wise intentions of the great and good Lafayette, who aimed to establish a government suited to the genius and adapted to the circumstances of the French nation, they established, and for a long time maintained, one of the most absolute and unrelenting despotisms that ever afflicted and disgraced mankind. We were not disposed to enter upon a course of experiments in Church government for the mere pleasure of experimenting, although the proposition was urged upon us with all the zeal and prancing eloquence of a French revolutionist. The examples before us had been too recently exhibited, and the effects too terrible to be forgotten. It was to the same spirit of innovation, the same recklessness of consequences and disregard of the lessons of experience, which actuated our reformers, that may be attributed the cruel mockery of human hope, and the disappointment of the best and dearest anticipations of mankind, by the bloody scenes and fatal termination of the French revolution. That wild and visionary philosophy which proposed to resolve society into its original elements, in order to build it up anew—which, despising the sober lessons of experience, persists to propose schemes of government,

adapted not to the condition of man as he is, but to man as he should be—has reared and dedicated to the fabled deities, Belial and Moloch, the gods of false reasoning and of murder, a column more useful, and we hope more durable, than the pyramids of Egypt—a column erected with the bones and cemented with the blood of millions of its unhappy victims. The genius of history, in pity to mankind, has inscribed upon its summit a lesson to be read by every nation, and kindred, and tongue under heaven : “LET NO MAN DECEIVE YOU BY A VAIN AND DECEITFUL PHILOSOPHY.” “TRUE PHILOSOPHY IS REASON TEACHING FROM EXPERIENCE.” “REPEAT IT UNTIL IT COMES INTO THE CURRENCY OF A PROVERB—TO INNOVATE IS NOT TO REFORM.”

Alas ! the sacred names of liberty, republicanism, rights of man, philosophy, have all been abused in more countries than in one, to purposes of selfishness and personal ambition. Those who have desired to possess authority and distinction, have found a ready way to their object by becoming the most violent declaimers in favour of liberty and equality.

Our reformers professed to be republicans, and yet they insisted upon subverting and revolutionizing our Church government, not only without the consent, but contrary to the wishes of the great body of their brethren, both preachers and laymen. But then, they claimed all the talents and intelligence of the Church ! *The rest were too ignorant to be consulted on the subject !* The committee and the General Conference, however, had a different and much more favourable opinion of the intelligence of the membership. They knew them to be generally opposed to the innovation, and they respected their sentiments. Apart from all other objections to the scheme of reform proposed by the memorialists, it was sufficient for the conference to know that such a revolution in our ecclesiastical economy would be disapproved by more than ninety-five in a hundred of all who were interested in it. It would have been equally unjust and anti-republican to have granted the petition of the memorialists. But this is not the only sample our reformers have given us of *their* republicanism. After abusing our preachers as despots, and the members as slaves, they have left us, and instituted a system of their own, which, while it amuses the lay members with a show of republicanism, effectually secures to the local preachers all the powers of the government ! We are told, however, that “they were not prepared for the measure ; they had no examples before them ; they had not sufficiently discussed the subject ; and hence, the system is defective.” The examples of all the Christian Churches in the world were before them. They had been discussing this very subject for more than seven years, and had so far matured their views as to assure the General Conference that the adoption of them was necessary to the peace and prosperity of the Church. What a fine situation we should have been in, if the Conference had taken their word for the assertion, and adopted their

schemes! We should have had the inexpressible consolation of being assured, that although the system for which we had exchanged our long-tried, and eminently-successful institutions, was imperfect, nay, totally impracticable; yet we should have the pleasure of trying our hands at it again after a while! The reader may be tempted to levity by such egregious absurdity, but he will be recalled to sobriety and seriousness, by the recollection that in these absurdities may be involved the interests, the eternal interests, not only of the authors of these wild and visionary projects, but also of hundreds of simple, good-meaning people, who are misled by their influence and example.

#### NOTE II.

THE Report of the committee on petitions and memorials, as adopted by the General Conference of 1828, is now fairly before our readers; and we shall proceed to notice the objections which have been urged against it by our enemies. When the Report was read in the Conference, Mr. Shinn, one of the leading reformers, was so impatient for its adoption that he immediately moved the Conference to adopt it, without making the slightest objection to any part of it, and without waiting to hear whether any other member had any objections to urge. The gentleman also joined in the unanimous vote of the Conference by which it was adopted, and thereby sent it to the Church, with all the doctrines and sentiments it contained, with the sanction of his approbation. He now tells us that one of the motives which actuated him was, that the objectionable positions taken in the Report could be easily refuted. But if so, was it not his duty to have refuted them in Conference—to have pointed out to the supreme council of the Church the heterodoxy of the opinions advocated by the committee, and thereby saved the Church, of which he was a pastor, and the annual conference which had delegated him to represent it from the injury and disgrace which he now thinks were incurred by the unadvised adoption of a report containing the most antichristian claims on the part of the ministry?

He alleges, however, that he knew it was useless to make any effort from the result of previous endeavors. But although to have been repeatedly defeated in his opposition to similar measures might have justified him in ceasing from useless exertion, it could by no means warrant his advocating or even acquiescing in measures which his judgment disapproved, and which he believed would do great injury to the Church.

But is it true that Mr. Shinn had been favoured before the reading of the Report with any opportunity in the General Conference to advocate the changes proposed in our Church government by the memorialists, or to refute the arguments by which these changes were resisted? We believe not. The appeals of Mr. D. B. Dorsey, and Mr. Wm. Pool, had been

before the Conference, and Mr. Shinn had been appointed by the appellants as their representative. The duty thus assigned him had been discharged to his utmost ability ; but these cases did not necessarily involve the general subject embraced in the Report, and Mr. Shinn, as their advocate, carefully avoided blending them in his argument. He confined himself, as it was proper he should do, to the special pleading which the cases demanded, and endeavoured to show that the decisions of the Baltimore Annual Conference in the premises were not according to, or sustained by, the Discipline of the Church. In the arguments for and against the appeals, the question about the propriety of altering our Discipline did not and could not arise. The decisions of inferior judicatories could only be annulled or affirmed by the General Conference, according to the rules and regulations of the Church as they existed at the time. The propriety of altering such rules and regulations was not therefore argued or suggested during the discussion which took place in the General Conference upon the several appeals of Rev. D. B. Dorsey or Rev. Wm. Pool ; nor was there any other occasion which could give an opportunity for discussion upon this subject until the Report of the committee upon the petitions and memorials, which prayed for alterations in our ecclesiastical economy, was read in the Conference. Mr. Shinn had not, therefore, ascertained by any previous experiment which he had made what were the views of the Conference in reference to the wonderful reformation which he and his coadjutors had proposed to effect in our Church government, much less had he ascertained the opinion of that body upon the doctrines and principles contained in the Report. Yet he not only permitted his brethren to adopt a Report containing principles and avowing opinions which he deemed then, and continues to believe, highly objectionable and dangerous, but led them into the error both by precept and example. He not only moved its adoption, but voted for it himself, and that too without apprizing his brethren that there was anything in the Report which he did not entirely approve.

At the time of the transaction to which we have referred, and which we witnessed, we really did believe that the clear and distinct renunciation of any strictly-legislative authority which the Report contained had satisfied Mr. S. ; that he no longer found any necessity for a lay delegation in a body professing to claim no authority to make laws for the government of the laity or ministry either, and therefore had resolved to desist from further controversy on the subject. These were our impressions at the time when the Report was adopted ; and we retained them until we received the melancholy news of the mover's mental alienation, to which he himself so feelingly adverts. The circumstances were then sufficiently accounted for without supposing the mover to have been influenced by the motives to which we at first attributed his conduct in regard to the Report ; and we certainly should never have brought against him the charge of inconsis-

teney, had he permitted the affair to rest without further animadversion. But Mr. S., after his restoration, has attempted to justify his motion to adopt the Report and his voting for it also, upon the ground that it contained some important concessions, and the objectionable parts could be assailed with advantage before the public. And he has accordingly assailed it with the utmost severity, but, we believe, with less success than he anticipated. The course which he pursued, and which he still, in his sober senses, justifies, unhappily quadrates with that system of management which has governed the movements of many of Mr. Shinn's associates in this revolutionary project ; but we confess we were disappointed in finding that *he* could be induced, by any consideration, even under all the assimilating influence of party spirit, to pursue such a course of policy.

Mr. Shinn seems, by certain allusions in the Mutual Rights, to have attributed the remarks of "A friend to peace," and the review of his pamphlet by "Silas Hopewell," (a fictitious signature,) to us. We beg leave to correct this error. We should be glad to claim the honour of having written these papers could we do it with justice ; but they are not ours. Mr. Shinn may be assured that he has fallen into abler hands. Other writers have done that for us which we readily confess we could not have done so well ourselves ; but they have confined their remarks to Mr. Shinn's pamphlet, and it now remains for us to condense the desultory objections to the Report, which are scattered through the Mutual Rights, under a few general heads, and to reply to them severally and fairly. In doing this we shall be under the necessity of discriminating between what our opponents *charge* the Report with saying and what it *really* says, as much that has been alleged to be contained in it, or which has been inferred from it, can neither be found in the Report nor fairly deduced from anything it does contain. It is alleged, for instance, by writers in the Mutual Rights, that the General Conference declares, in the Report, that the local preachers and laymen of our Church "have no *rights* either natural or acquired." But there is no such expression in the Report, nor in any other document published or passed by the Conference. The Report contends that the lay members and the local preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church have no abstract natural right to seats in the General Conference ; and that they did not acquire this right by becoming members or local preachers, because it was no part of the agreement or compact into which they entered.

But it does not assert that they have no *other* natural rights as men, or acquired rights as citizens and Christians. Again it is asserted the General Conference contend that "they, (the Conference,) being the divinely-instituted overseers of the Church, have a divine right to govern the Church without control ;" yet there is nothing of this kind in the Report. On the contrary, the Report disclaims on the part of the Conference any authority

to legislate for the Church at all; and it only claims for them, in common with all the other pastors of the Church of Christ, a right to preach the gospel, administer the ordinances, and to expound and enforce the moral discipline of the Bible. Even this authority they do not claim a right to exercise over any but those who voluntarily consent to it, neither their ministrations nor their expositions being obligatory upon any but those who choose to receive them.

The terms, "divinely-instituted ministry," have been spurned and scoffed at by some as though the divine Founder of Christianity did not institute or promise to perpetuate a ministry in his Church at all; while others deride the terms on the ground that they are applied exclusively to the travelling preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church; yet the Report makes no such exclusive claim. It claims only that *the* divinely-instituted ministry are the divinely-authorized expounders of gospel doctrines, ordinances, and moral discipline, and that they are ministers of the gospel.

But it would be useless to mention all the misrepresentations of the language and meaning of the Report which have been resorted to by its various assailants. We have adverted to a few only, in order to show our readers the necessity of consulting the Report itself whenever they hear or read anything against it, and for this purpose we have spread the document itself before them. Dismissing, without further remark, the abuse which has been so lavishly bestowed upon the Report for what is not to be found in it, or inferred from it, we shall proceed to notice the objections which have been urged against the principles and opinions really avowed by the Conference.

#### NOTE III.

OF the opinions and principles avowed in the Report, the following are the most prominent and important, to wit:—

That the Christian ministry was instituted by divine authority, and that the great Head of the Church continues to perpetuate a living ministry in his Church, by calling and qualifying such as he approves for this good work; that such as are thus appointed have a divine authority, by virtue of their commission, to preach the gospel, to administer its ordinances, and to maintain its moral discipline, are, of course, authorized to explain or expound them; and that, in regard to the duties thus required of them by Him who called and appointed them to the work, they are under a moral obligation not to permit their ministrations to be authoritatively controlled by others. They are bound by the tenor of their commission. They must obey the commands of Him who hath sent them, and cannot, for any prospect of temporal advantage, abate one iota of these commands.

It is the commandment of the Lord contained in their commission,



“Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.” They are bound to comply with this requisition to the utmost of their ability, both in regard to the field of labour assigned them—“all the world”—and in regard to the subjects to whom they are to preach the gospel—namely, “to every creature.” The travelling ministry cannot, therefore, compromise with the laity in these respects. No temporal advantages can warrant them in confining their individual labour to single congregations, at the bidding of their lay brethren, unless they conscientiously believe that their usefulness would be augmented by the arrangement. Nor can they obey any determination of their lay brethren which should prescribe to them what they are to preach. They are bound by their commission to preach the gospel, the whole gospel, and nothing but the gospel. The commission of Christ is directed to the ministry, and not to the laity; and woe to the ministers who preach not the gospel, or who, for any temporal advantage, suffer themselves to be authoritatively controlled, in this respect, by any human power.

Suppose, then, that a lay delegation were admitted into our General Conference, and that this delegation were to procure the passage of some rule by which the ministry were abridged in the limits of their labours, and required to settle permanently among our congregations. It is obvious that the ministry could not comply with the rule any farther than they deemed it consistent with their ministerial commission. They are accountable to the great Head of the Church only for the manner in which they fulfil the duties assigned—not to them in common with the laity, but to them exclusively. It follows, then, that all the regulations by which the preachers are to carry on their own work ought to be made by themselves, because they only are responsible for its execution.

Suppose, on the other hand, the lay delegation were to abridge the authority of the ministry to preach the gospel—the glad tidings of salvation—a free, full, and present salvation, to every creature—to all men, and to all sorts of men; suppose they should be prohibited from offering all the privileges and blessings of the gospel to any but a certain class of men, denominated the “elect,” it is obvious that the ministry could not suffer themselves to be “authoritatively controlled” in this respect without violating their commission, which recognises no such limitation.

The Report, therefore, justly alleged that they could not suffer their ministrations, in this respect, to be authoritatively controlled. Again: suppose that in reference to the ordinances the laity were to insist that baptism and the Lord’s Supper should be administered to all who desired them, though they might not bring forth fruits meet for repentance, or even profess penitence at all, will it be contended that the ministry could suffer themselves to be “authoritatively controlled” in this matter? Could they, in obedience to any earthly authority, permit the sacred ordinances of

the gospel to be thus "trodden under foot of men?" They dare not. They have said that they are under a moral obligation not to do so, and they ought to have added, the obligation was not only a moral but a religious one. Every enlightened Christian will respond to the declaration, that in the discharge of these obligations their "consciences are involved."

From the ironical and contemptuous manner in which our opponents quoted the language of the Report immediately after its publication, we had feared that they meant to deny the divine institution of the Christian ministry altogether. The intention, however, is now disavowed by the highest authority among them, although nothing is said by way of apology or explanation of the taunting and indecorous manner in which the phrase, "divinely-instituted ministry," has been alluded to by their writers. Nor do we find any direct exception to the assertion of the Conference, that it is made the duty of the ministry to preach the gospel, administer its ordinances, and maintain its moral discipline; nor is it denied that they are divinely authorized to explain or expound both the doctrines and moral discipline of Christianity. To what, then, do our opponents object? Why, we are told that the ministry must prove something more before they establish the position that "all legislative, judicial, and executive authority in the Church belongs to them." But the claim to these prerogatives, as of divine right, is nowhere asserted in the Report. The Report nowhere says that the divinely-instituted ministry are the divinely-authorized legislators, judges, and executive officers of the Church; it only claims for them the authority, by divine appointment, to preach the gospel, administer its ordinances, and enforce its moral discipline. We have nothing to do, therefore, with the claim which has been objected to, for it has not been set up at any time by the Conference. On the contrary, the Conference has expressly disavowed any strictly-legislative powers whatever.

"The Church," says the Report, "has but one Lord and one Lawgiver." "We arrogate no authority to enact any laws of our own, either of moral or of civil force." "We claim no strictly-legislative powers." "The terms legislature and legislative are not strictly applicable to our General Conference." "As to the moral code we are subject, equally with themselves, (the laity,) to one only Lord. We have no power to add to, to take from, to alter, or to modify, a single item of his statutes." To what purpose, then, is it to argue against the claim of the General Conference to a divine right to "all the legislative, judicial, and executive authority in the Church, when the Conference has not only not claimed any such right, but expressly disavowed it?"

The Report is a valuable document, not only to the Methodists, but to the world. It defines the limits of ecclesiastical authority, with a distinctness and perspicuity which we do not recollect to have seen elsewhere.

No Church council, whether composed of ministers or laymen, have, in a proper sense, any legislative powers. The laws for the government of the Christian Church and Christians individually, were enacted by the one Lawgiver, or by those whom he especially authorized to establish them. All that is left for Church councils to do, is to make such prudential regulations or rules as may best enable them, under the circumstances in which they may be providentially placed, to fulfil, and carry into effect, the laws imposed by the great Head of the Church. To repeal, to alter them, or to substitute human for divine laws, is to renounce allegiance to our rightful Lord and Sovereign; but to obey and enforce them, may require rules and regulations, which, in the nature of things, could not have been provided for in the statutes of Christianity, because these rules must vary with the variable condition and circumstances of the Christian Church. Thus it is a law of Christianity, common to ministers and laymen, that every disciple of Christ shall give according to his ability, for the relief of the poor, and for the support of the gospel. But the law could not provide the manner of making these donations, the means by which they should be collected, nor the method of distributing them. All this must be done according to such conventional rules and regulations, as the prudence and wisdom of the Church may from time to time direct. Again: the laws of the Christian code forbid immorality, and annex as a penalty for the commission of it an exclusion from the Church; but how the Church shall proceed in ascertaining whether a member of the Church be guilty of an alleged immorality, is not expressly prescribed, because a general regulation might, from the particular circumstances of the Church, have become not only inapplicable, but even impracticable. The mode of procedure, under such circumstances, must therefore be provided by some conventional rule. No Church has a right to alter the statute, and to tolerate immorality; it can only provide the measures best calculated to carry the laws into effect.

These prudential "rules and regulations" are made in the Methodist Episcopal Church, under certain constitutional limitations, by the General Conference, which is composed exclusively of ministers; and our opponents have most unaccountably fallen into the error, that the Report asserts they have a *divine right* to do so. The Report, however, nowhere asserts this, nor is it to be inferred from anything in the Report. The right to preach the gospel, to administer its ordinances, and to enforce its moral discipline, is indeed claimed as of divine appointment; but this does not imply a right to make those conventional regulations by which the divine statutes which impose duties common to ministers and laymen are to be carried into effect in any particular Church. Those commands which are directed exclusively to ministers, and which, as they say, rest upon them with the force of moral obligations, they must

fulfil according to their understanding of their meaning, and therefore according to regulations adopted by themselves. But whatever is common to all, may, without any violation of the divine injunction or authority, be provided for by the common consent, obtained in any way which may be deemed most expedient.

On what ground, then, it may be asked, does the Conference claim a right to make these conventional regulations? We answer, as we have often answered before, the authority was originally, and of necessity, in the hands of our preachers; and the membership, generally, are of opinion that it would be injurious to our welfare, as a Church, to alter this part of our economy. In short, the power was at first exercised from necessity, and it has since been acquiesced in and continued from expediency. The Report itself states, that the preachers coming from all parts of their extensive field of labour, were well acquainted with the sentiments and feelings of the membership, and were assured that those who desired to revolutionize our economy, constituted a very small minority of the Church. The Conference could not, under such circumstances, have granted the demands of the memorialists, without a manifest disregard of the wishes and feelings of their brethren, both of the ministry and membership.

NOTE IV.

MR. SHINN explicitly admits that the ministry is "bound, in duty, to preach the gospel, administer its ordinances, and maintain its moral discipline,"—and this is all that the Conference claim as of divine right. But then he insists that the private members have an equal right, both to judge of the doctrines of the gospel, and to be co-workers with the ministry in maintaining its moral discipline; and that "all Christians have a right to read the Bible, and this right they have by nature and by Christianity." Did the reverend author mean to insinuate that these rights had been denied by the Conference? If he did, he is certainly mistaken; and if he did not, his readers will be in danger of misunderstanding him, as it will not be readily perceived why he should, in replying to the Report, argue in favour of rights which *have not* been questioned. The Conference says expressly: "No man is bound to receive our doctrines merely because we believe and teach them, nor unless they have his own cordial assent. Neither is any man obliged to submit himself to what we believe to be the moral discipline of the gospel, and our duty to enforce, unless he believes it to be so also." Is not this a very distinct recognition of all that Mr. Shinn claims in favour of the private members, as belonging to them "by nature and by Christianity?"

The truth is, Mr. Shinn, as well as the late convention, in their opposition to the Report, everywhere confound the authority claimed by the

Conference "*for the Christian ministry*," "to preach the gospel, administer its ordinances, and maintain its moral discipline"—which the Report says was given by the great Head of the Church himself,—with the authority exercised *by the Conference*, to make those prudential rules and arrangements which may be found necessary for the due execution of the divine laws, which never have been claimed as of divine right, but only upon the ground of expediency and compact, or conventional agreement.

In the memorial, to which the Report is intended as a reply, the travelling preachers were compared to the ancient Druids,—the despots of Babylon, of Egypt, of India, and of Tartary. It was incumbent on the Conference to disclaim all such arbitrary authority over any persons whatever; to show that they only claimed, in common with others who are called to the ministry, a divine right to preach the gospel to such as were willing to hear them, to administer its ordinances to such as were willing to receive them at their hands, and to enforce its moral discipline over such as voluntarily place themselves under their pastoral care; but that they claimed no right to compel any one to hear them preach, to receive the ordinances at their hands, to come under their pastoral charge, or to adopt, without conviction, their expositions of the doctrines and moral discipline of Christianity. Every one must judge for himself, and act from his own convictions of duty; because every one must give an account of himself to God. The Conference did not mean to assert, nor to insinuate, that all that appertained to our ecclesiastical economy was of divine appointment. The allegation is gratuitous; and in making it, our adversaries have been disingenuous and unjust. If the Conference had designed to assert that our form of government was expressly and exclusively enjoined by the word of God, they would have relied upon this warrant for its defence; it would have been unnecessary to go into any arguments to show, as they have done, the expediency and utility of our present polity. "Thus saith the Lord," certainly supersedes, with Christians, all other authority, and renders superfluous all other reasons for submission and obedience.

We are now prepared to meet the objection to the Report most relied upon, both by Mr. Shinn and the convention, to wit:—That if the divinely-instituted ministry have a divine right to certain privileges, the local preachers, as being ministers by the same divine authority, are clothed with the same rights by the divine command. Why, then, do the travelling preachers exclude them from a community of privileges and common exercise of ministerial authority? We have endeavoured to state the objection in the strongest terms, and to place it in the clearest light. We wish not to evade the force of it, and readily acknowledge it requires deliberate consideration. If the travelling preachers have deprived their

brethren, the local preachers, of any rights which appertain to them as ministers, they are bound to rectify the error, and hasten to restore to them their rights; and if they have withheld privileges which belong to the local ministry in common with all other ministers of the gospel, they ought to withhold them no longer, lest they be found to violate the commands of the "one Lord and Lawgiver." Let us then carefully examine the case; and, as the writer himself is a local preacher, he hopes at least to do justice to his own side of the question.

We have seen what is claimed by the Conference in favour of the Christian ministry,—namely, a divine authority to "preach the gospel, administer its ordinances, and maintain its moral discipline;" and a right to expound or explain them without being authoritatively controlled in the exercise of their ministerial functions. Now what part of this authority is denied to the local preachers? They exercise their right to preach the gospel and administer its ordinances whenever recommended by the local,\* or quarterly-meeting conferences. They enforce and expound the moral discipline of the gospel, as preachers; and, for the most part, as class-leaders, when they are desirous or willing to do so. The only authority then to which they are not admitted in common with the travelling preachers, is that of executing the discipline of the Church as pastors of the flock.

But has the authority been withheld from them by the travelling preachers? Certainly not. They do not exercise it, because they have alleged that although they believe themselves called to preach the gospel, yet their temporal circumstances, or other hinderances, prevent them from devoting themselves exclusively to the ministry,—“giving themselves wholly” to the work, and “taking an oversight thereof.” They therefore occupy an auxiliary relation to the regular pastors of the Church, and are usefully employed in the common cause, whenever their secular affairs afford them an opportunity to labour. It is, then, or it ought to be, providential circumstances which prevent their taking a pastoral oversight of the Church, and maintaining its moral discipline by the due enforcement of its laws.

We do not undertake to say that all our local preachers are prevented by the necessity of circumstances from devoting themselves entirely to the work of the ministry. Some may not desire to do so: and if this be the case, these are not fit to be pastors or preachers either. Those who burn with a Christian zeal for the salvation of souls, will exceedingly desire to be unfettered and loosened from all secular concerns that hinder them, in any degree, from performing the great work to which they are called; they only submit to their local relation from inability to do more

\* It must be remembered that at this time the local preachers had a conference of their own.

in the vineyard. Meantime their secular affairs do not allow them to take an oversight of stations or circuits, and to exercise that part of the pastoral authority which consists in a proper enforcement of discipline. The situation they occupy, is the one to which they profess to have been called in the order of Providence, and not one which has been assigned them by the itinerant ministry in contempt of their rights. No man who has paid the least attention to our economy will say, that it would be for the interest of our Church to commit the pastoral care of our people to the local preachers; or that it would be consistent with the social and relative duties of the local ministry to neglect their secular affairs, in order to perform the duties which such authority would necessarily impose. From all which it is clearly shown, that the only authority claimed by the Report for the ministry as appertaining to them in virtue of the divine commission, which is not exercised by the local preachers, is one which they are prevented from exercising by the providential circumstances in which they are placed or profess to be placed; and not by any disposition on the part of their itinerant brethren to withhold from them their rights.

It may also be alleged, that the members of our Church, individually, joined it under an arrangement by which their pastoral ministry were bound to give themselves wholly to the work, and to labour in any part of the vineyard which might, from time to time, be assigned them. The itinerant ministry cannot alter this arrangement and transfer our members to a settled or local pastoral ministry, without violating the compact with the membership, who have never desired to be so transferred. It will not be questioned that the membership are as much averse to such a change as the travelling preachers can be; and it would be outraging all moral and religious obligation to make it without their consent.

But perhaps it is not so much the pastoral charge of circuits, stations, or societies that is claimed for the local ministry, as a right to seats in the supreme council of the Church,—an exclusive right to which, Mr. Shinn says, “is claimed, but not proved in the Report,” in favour of the travelling preachers. “The assumption,” says he, “appears to involve the Conference in a fearful responsibility; for if ministers, in virtue of being moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel, are bound, in conscience, to exercise all the rights contended for in the Report, how dare the General Conference forbid three thousand local ministers to exercise their divine rights, or put it out of their power to perform their ministerial functions enjoined on them by the force of a moral obligation?” We have shown that all the rights which are claimed “in virtue of being moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel,” are *conceded* to the ministry by Mr. Shinn, and *enjoyed* by the local preachers—as far as their circumstances, *in their own estimation*, enable them to exercise these rights and discharge the duties which they necessarily imply. For the rest, the Conference

have not claimed the authority of making "social rules," not provided in the Scriptures, by virtue of any divine authority. They make these "social rules" under the authority vested in them by the compact or "social" agreement which has been entered into with them by every individual member and every individual local preacher in the Church.

That the local preachers among our adversaries did not consider themselves entitled to representation in the General Conference as ministers, is evident from the memorial of the convention to which the Report is a reply. In this memorial, the local preachers neither claim nor petition for any distinct representation. They admit their secular character, by *asking* to be identified with the laity, in the electing and serving as delegates to the General Conference. The Conference took up the claims of the local reformers where they had placed these claims themselves. In this respect they had voluntarily relinquished or disavowed any pretensions to a separate representation; and the Conference reply to the common petition by arguments against the utility and practicability of the innovation, which are alike applicable to both classes of the memorialists.

In short, our readers will perceive that none of the powers or privileges claimed in the Report as appertaining to the Christian ministry in virtue of their divine ministerial commission, are withheld from the local preachers by their itinerant brethren, although the latter do exercise a pastoral authority which is not exercised by the former, in consequence of their secular engagements, or other avowed hinderances; and that the necessity of these secular engagements, or these insurmountable hinderances, have been urged by the local preachers themselves, as *a ground of exemption* from the pastoral duties performed by the travelling preachers. The exclusive right to constitute our General Conference is not claimed in the Report in virtue of any divine institution or authority. The right is a conventional one, which has been sanctioned by every member of our communion, whether local preacher or layman; and whether this part of our economy ought to be altered, is a question of expediency only, which has been decided in the negative, by at least ninety-five in a hundred of all the members of our Church, whether ministers or laymen.

#### NOTE V.

HAVING shown in our previous numbers that the General Conference had never made the high ecclesiastical pretensions attributed to them by our adversaries, and that the ministerial claims asserted in the Report of the committee on petitions and memorials, are none other than those which are admitted by all Christian Churches, and which are founded upon the indubitable authority of Holy Scripture, we have waited to hear what our adversaries could say in vindication of their contemptuous sneering at



the doctrine advanced in the Report—namely, that the Christian ministry was a divine institution, being originally instituted by the Divine Author of our holy religion himself, and perpetuated by the same authority in all ages of the Church. We have waited in vain. Our adversaries have been compelled to change their ground. It was found, that to deny the divine institution of the Christian ministry, was not only untenable, but would be arraying themselves against most other Christian denominations, as well as against the Methodists. They, therefore, affect to understand the Report as claiming for the itinerant Methodist preachers *exclusively* the authority of the divinely-instituted ministry; and although no such pretension is to be found in the Report—though its language cannot be tortured into such a meaning—yet they have continued to assert it, without offering either proof or reference, with a dogged pertinacity, which could only be sustained by the opinion that their partisans seldom read anything on this controversy but the “Mutual Rights.”

They have gone still further. They have asserted, in the very face of the Report itself, that the General Conference claims, in virtue of the *exclusively*-divine institution of the Methodist ministry, a divine right to exercise all the powers of government over the Church, whether legislative, executive, or judicial. In vain does the Conference declare in the Report that they claim no strictly-legislative powers whatever; that they “arrogate no authority to make any laws of their own, either of moral or civil force.” Still is it reiterated with a hardihood which cannot blush, that the authority is claimed by the very document in which it is so explicitly disavowed. It is an unhappy necessity which obliges us to contend with such adversaries.

Mr. Shinn, indeed, perceiving that the plain and unequivocal disavowal of legislative powers by the Conference could not be misunderstood by any who would be at the pains of consulting the Report itself, endeavours to show that the declaration is at variance with fact; that the Conference *have exercised* the authority to make a penal statute, in enacting the rule which requires the meeting in class as a condition of Church membership. He contends that this requisition by the Conference amounts to a claim to “add to, alter, or modify the standing laws of our Divine Master.” He asks, “Have not some such rules been already enacted by the General Conference?” And he answers the interrogatory, by quoting the rule of Discipline in reference to those who habitually neglect, or who refuse to meet their class. “Let him who has the charge of the circuit exclude them, showing that they are laid aside for a breach of our rules of Discipline, and not for immoral conduct.” “Does not this,” says Mr. Shinn, “give our rules of Discipline equal authority to exclude members from the Church that the divine laws themselves possess? and what is this but adding to his statutes?”

As this is the *only* instance in which the practice of the General Conference is alleged, even by our adversaries, to contradict their disavowal of legislative authority, we deem it important to examine the objection carefully and dispassionately. Another writer in the Itinerant has adverted to the objection, and has endeavoured to show that the obligation to meet in class is to be found in the Bible. We do not hesitate to acknowledge candidly, that although the argument is ingenious—and we have great respect for that writer's opinions—yet we are not satisfied with his proofs. We think the Scripture quotations which he has furnished do not apply with sufficient precision to the point at issue. It has not been clearly proved to our apprehension, that the Scriptures make it the duty of *all Christians* to attend class-meeting, or any similar institution; and therefore it can only be the duty of Methodists, in consequence of their having individually contracted an obligation to do so. A Methodist, in common with all other Christians, is bound to fulfil his engagements; and if, in his social compact with his brethren, he has stipulated to meet them in class-meeting, for purposes deemed essential to the common welfare, *his contract* has all the force of a moral obligation. Let it be distinctly understood here, that we speak of *obligation* in the legal sense of the word. The *inducements* which influence us to attend class-meeting, strong and numerous as they are, are not now the subject of discussion.

We wish to meet Mr. Shinn's objection fairly, and therefore we will state it explicitly.

The General Conference had been frequently accused of arrogating supreme legislative powers; and in the memorial from the radical convention in Baltimore, these powers were compared to those once exercised by the ancient Druids, and the despots of Babylon, Egypt, India, and Tartary. To all this the Conference reply, by unequivocally declaring that they claim no strictly-legislative authority of any kind whatever. They only exercise, by the consent of the Church, the power to make such prudential regulations as are found necessary to administer and *enforce the laws* already enacted and enjoined upon all Christians, by the one only Lord and Lawgiver.

Our adversaries allege, that the practice of the Conference is at variance with this declaration, because they have made a rule by which a person may be expelled from Church fellowship for not attending class, and this, they say, is adding to the divine statutes. To this we answer:—

*First.* The rule alluded to was not enacted by the General Conference at all. It was introduced into Mr. Wesley's societies in England before there were any Methodists in America; and it originated, too, with the membership, incidentally. The following account of it is given by Mr. Wesley himself:—

“But when a large number of people was joined, the great difficulty

was to keep them together ; for they were continually scattering hither and thither, and we knew no way to help it. But God provided for this also, when we thought not of it." It happened that "Mr. Wesley met the chief of the society in Bristol, and inquired, 'How shall we pay the debt upon the preaching-house?' Captain Foy stood up and said, 'Let every one in the society give a penny a week, and it will easily be done.' 'But many of them,' said one, 'have not a penny to give.' 'True,' said the captain, 'then put ten or twelve of them to me; let each of these give what he can weekly, and I will supply what is wanting.' Many others made the same offer. So Mr. Wesley divided the societies among them, assigning a class of about twelve persons to each of these, who were termed leaders.

"Not long after, one of these informed Mr. Wesley that, calling on such a one in his house, he found him quarrelling with his wife. Another was found in drink. It immediately struck Mr. Wesley's mind, 'This [class-meetings] is the very thing we wanted; the leaders are the persons who may not only receive the contributions, but also watch over the souls of their brethren.' The society in London being informed of this, willingly followed the example of that in Bristol, as did every society from that time, whether in Europe or America. By this means it was easily found if any grew weary or faint, and help was speedily administered; and if any walked disorderly, they were quickly discovered, and either amended or dismissed."

The usefulness of the regulation led to its universal adoption as a social compact, and from that time every one who entered the society in England, or the Church in America, came under a personal and individual obligation to conform to it so long as he continued in the connexion. This was the state of things at the time of the adoption of our present form of Church government; and the General Conference, so far from being under any necessity of *enacting* a rule requiring the members to attend class-meeting, found them already united under this social obligation, and they would certainly have destroyed the connexion if they had abolished it. It was not, and never has been, submitted to as a law, but has always been sought and prized as an inestimable privilege.

Whether, therefore, the rule be right or wrong, the General Conference are not chargeable with enacting or imposing it. If it could be shown to be an improper condition of membership, it would prove nothing against the declaration of the Conference, that they claim no strictly-legislative powers.

*Secondly.* The Scriptures evidently require of the pastors of the Church a faithful oversight of the flock. They are directed to watch over them as those who must render an account of them to God. It is their duty to instruct the ignorant, support the weak, comfort the afflicted, confirm the wavering, and repress the froward. By a settled pastor, permanently resident among his flock, this may, perhaps, be done by frequent domiciliary

visits ; but by an itinerating ministry, it can only be accomplished by means of some such institution as our class-meetings. It is, however, obvious that, if the Scriptures impose pastoral duties upon the ministry, the membership are bound to place themselves in such a relation to their ministers as will enable them to fulfil these duties : and hence, they who prefer an itinerating ministry, are bound to submit to such regulations as may be necessary to the due and faithful discharge of ministerial obligation. It will not, we presume, be denied that our itinerating ministry is a Scriptural institution ; and hence, whatever be essential to its existence and usefulness, may be properly required of those who voluntarily put themselves under the pastoral care of such a ministry.

*Thirdly.* When a Methodist refuses to meet his class, he virtually withdraws from the Church. He renounces the social obligation into which he entered when he became a member of the community. He puts it out of the power of the pastors of the Church to fulfil their ministerial duties to him ; and as they can no longer watch over him, they cannot be expected to be responsible for him, or to admit him to the communion, his fitness for which they have no longer any means of ascertaining. He is, accordingly, by our rule of Discipline, "*laid aside*," and not expelled for immoral conduct. If it be alleged that a man does not, properly speaking, withdraw from the Church, unless he accompanies the act by some corresponding declaration, in word or writing, we answer, that the Church possesses no authority to require a written or verbal withdrawal, or any explicit renunciation of Church privileges ; and is, therefore, compelled to consider an actual removal from pastoral oversight as a withdrawing from Church membership. The rule, then, which requires a Methodist to meet in class, is not a penal statute added to the divine laws—it is a voluntary social contract, which, when not fulfilled, implies a renunciation of the compact, which it is admitted every one has a right to make, whenever he repents his engagements ; but he cannot dissolve the compact, and still retain the privileges which grow out of it. The obligation and the benefits which accrue from it, cease at the same time.

But whence this unceasing quarrel with class-meeting in the "Mutual Rights," as a term of Church membership ? There is nothing in this whole controversy which shows more clearly a disposition to cavil for cavilling's sake. Our adversaries admit all that we allege as to the utility of class-meetings. They even admit explicitly, that a neglect of them by our members is always accompanied with, if it is not preceded by, a declension in religion, and generally by a positive backsliding both in heart and life ; and yet they will not permit us to require of our members to meet in class. They have instituted class-meetings themselves, and made it obligatory upon their members to meet in class ; they have, in fact, no other rule upon the subject than what is found in that part of *our Dis-*

*cipline* which they have adopted;\* and yet, for more than eight years they have been quarrelling with us for making class-meetings a condition of Church membership. Mr. Shinn does not, perhaps, consider these as "unblushing absurdities." All disinterested observers, however, will, we apprehend, adopt a different opinion.

The committee on petitions and memorials observe, that "we (the itinerant ministers) have been charged with wishing to suppress free inquiry, and with denying to our ministers and members the liberty of speech and of the press. But the charge we wholly disavow. Our ministers and members of every class are entitled to the full liberty of speech and of the press equally with any other citizens of the United States." Mr. Shinn, in his review, quotes this passage of the Report, and then says, "But if this liberty of speech and of the press is allowed to our ministers and members equally with any other citizens of the United States, how is it that ministers and members have been expelled for not giving up the 'Mutual Rights,' merely because the work is a periodical? This seems to be implied by the terms proposed by the General Conference for the restoration of peace. But surely citizens of the United States have as much authority to issue a periodical publication as to enjoy the liberty of the press in any other way whatever. Was it merely because this work was inflammatory, or because it was obnoxious? Then why did the General Conference propose that no other periodical publication be devoted to the same controversy? The Conference did not assume the right to require this; but what did the inferior tribunal require in their process of expulsions?"

To all these interrogatories we answer, that the General Conference would have made no requirements at all of those who had been expelled from the Church, if the terms of union had not been *offered by the expelled members themselves*. During the session of Conference propositions were made to "the committee on the itinerancy," by certain friends and authorized representatives of the expelled ministers and members in Baltimore, who had given to one or more of these representatives a *carte blanche* to make, in their name, "any concessions which Christians ought to make or Christians ought to require." Among the concessions offered, were the discontinuance of the Mutual Rights, and an acknowledgment that "publications have appeared in the said Mutual Rights, the nature and character of which were unjustifiably inflammatory, and do not admit of vindication; and that others, though for want of information or unintentionally, have yet, in fact, misrepresented both individuals and facts; and that they regret these things;" and also "the abolition of the Union Society."

The committee on the itinerancy approved the conditions, and prepared a report accordingly. But before it was submitted to the Conference, the

\* So in their first "Articles of Association." We think the rule underwent some modification afterward.

inquiry was suggested, whether the proposition to discontinue the publication of the Mutual Rights implied a discontinuance of any periodical publication devoted to this controversy. If it did not, then peace and the restoration of good feeling would not follow; for the mere change of *name* would not make any change in the spirit and character of the periodical. While a party paper was continued, individual writers would feel themselves supported by party array and compact, and would indulge in a violence which, if they stood alone, would be rebuked by the common feeling of the community. It had never occurred to the committee, while these concessions were under consideration, that any intention existed to take advantage of the equivocal expression in the proposition to discontinue the "Mutual Rights."

But when it was suggested that it might only mean that the name of the periodical should be changed, and that it should be published in a newspaper instead of a pamphlet form, it was deemed proper to make the inquiry. This inquiry resulted in the declaration of four of those representatives, that they considered the proposition as pledging those concerned to a total abandonment of any periodical devoted to the controversy, and they were willing to make the proposition more explicit. One representative, however, though he acknowledged that the proposition fairly implied what was understood by the committee to be its meaning, yet he would not consent to alter the proposition. This person was Mr. Shinn himself; and as his consent was considered by those associated with him in the negotiation to be essential to any agreement which might be made, the negotiation was broken off. It was subsequently resumed by a member of the Conference, and the propositions offered by the representatives of the expelled members were accepted by the Conference as conditions upon which they might be re-united to the Church, except that the proposal to discontinue the Mutual Rights was made more definitely to express an agreement to discontinue the publication of any periodical devoted to this controversy. It was at the same time distinctly understood, that the "Itinerant," &c.—proposals for which had been issued—should not be published.

Now, if Mr. Shinn, in his propositions to the Conference, on the part of his expelled associates, did intend to propose the discontinuance of any periodical devoted to this controversy, why does he complain of the Conference for having proposed this measure as one of the "terms for the restoration of peace?" If he did not intend so much, then his intentions were at variance with his declarations at the time the offer was made; and moreover, the proposal was "calculated, if not intended," to take his brethren in, as it must be utterly indifferent whether an offensive publication was called Mutual Rights, Wesleyan Repository, or by any other appellation.

Mr. Shinn asks why the inferior tribunals of the Church expelled members for not giving up the Mutual Rights ? We answer, that the individuals alluded to persisted to recommend and circulate a work which he himself acknowledged contained matter "*unjustifiably inflammatory, misrepresenting both individuals and facts.*" *This they did, not only as individuals, but in their associated capacity as members of Union Societies.* From this conduct they refused to desist ; and hence it became necessary, not only for the peace of the Church, but for the preservation of the moral and religious character of the Methodist community, to expel them from our communion. It was not for patronizing "*a periodical publication,*" which might be as harmless as any other medium of communication, but for issuing and recommending a publication of the character which Mr. Shinn had pronounced the "Mutual Rights" to be, together with other unjustifiable proceedings, that they were expelled. The expulsion, therefore, was just, according to Mr. Shinn's own showing.

Permit us, in conclusion, to ask Mr. Shinn to review his conduct in this matter. Was it fair-play to offer propositions of compromise on the part of his expelled friends, and then, without letting the public know what part he had taken in the matter, condemn the Conference for *proposing* unjustifiable "conditions for the restoration of peace ?" Was it fair to represent the Church judicatories as abridging the liberty of speech and of the press by expelling members simply for publishing and patronizing a *periodical publication*, when he himself had acknowledged that the periodical alluded to was one which was unjustifiably inflammatory, and misrepresented both facts and individuals ?

We sincerely believe that if Mr. Shinn were not influenced by party spirit he could not have been betrayed into such disingenuousness. Our observation has long since convinced us, that under the dominion of this powerful and all-assimilating agency, the conduct of men cannot be anticipated from calculations made upon the ordinary principles of human action.

## REMARKS ON DR. JENNINGS'S "REVIEW OF THE METHODIST MAGAZINE AND QUARTERLY REVIEW, ON PETITIONS AND MEMORIALS."

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DR. JENNINGS commenced, in the thirty-fourth number of the "Mutual Rights," what he calls "A Review of the Methodist Quarterly Review on Petitions and Memorials," which has been continued in numbers down to the present time. The doctor has adopted, with great fidelity, the modern method of reviewers, which consists in saying as little about the book under review as possible, after giving its title. We had expected, from the heading of the articles, some discussion of the very important topics contained in the Report on Petitions and Memorials. In this reasonable expectation we have been totally disappointed; but, instead of it, we have a reiteration of the doctor's protest against the proceedings of the Church judicatories, by which he was tried and expelled—a protest which was published while his trial was yet pending, and circulated with great industry, with a view to forestall public opinion, while the friends of the Church were withheld from publishing any contradictory statements, lest they should thereby prejudice the cause of the accused. The doctor proceeds, however, not to review the "Methodist Magazine and Quarterly Review," but the Narrative and Defence of the proceedings of the Church in Baltimore, in reference to those who had been expelled from her communion; and as he has fallen into many errors in regard to facts, as well as reasoning, in the course of his remarks, we hope that he will not be offended if we presume to set him right in both respects. The errors in relation to facts and circumstances are easily shown; our reasoning must abide the decision of our readers.

But, may we be permitted, before we proceed to the examination of the doctor's statements, or his arguments, to ask, Why does he consider it such a great injury to be disowned by the Methodists? If the Church is as despotic in her government, as corrupt in her ministry and membership, and as hopeless in her obstinate adherence to error, as he and his friends have been wont to represent her, why should he desire to continue in her communion? Nay, if they have not misrepresented our Church when they have accused her ministers of being hostile to civil liberty, and the economy of the Church as tending to the overthrow of the republican institutions of our happy country; if, in the doctor's own language, we are "forging fetters both for the present generation and for posterity," how could he tolerate and countenance such a treasonable combination by remaining among us? If he believed the Methodist Episcopal Church



dangerous to the liberty and prosperity of his country, how could he pray for her success? And would he continue a member of a community for whose success he dare not pray? The truth is, that if these allegations against us were anything more than rhetorical flourishes—if they were believed by those who made them—the doctor and his associates ought not to have laid us under the necessity of expelling them. They ought to have renounced our fellowship, and made haste to repair the injury which they had done their country, by having so long aided us in building up a Church, and diffusing an influence so dangerous to the best interests of mankind.

But if these things were asserted without being believed,—what then? Could those who made them reasonably expect the Church to endure this unjust reproach from children brought up and nurtured in her bosom, without any effort to repel the charge? In either case, surely, the least that could be expected from the meekness of our holy religion itself was, that the accusers should be required to sustain or retract the charges; and if neither alternative was complied with, that the offenders should be cut off from the communion of the Church, until, by confession and repentance, they should have atoned for the injury! This was done; and notwithstanding the strenuous efforts made by the accused to prejudice the public mind pending the trials, by the cry of persecution and tyranny, a plain “Narrative and Defence” of the proceedings justified the Church before the Christian public. So conclusive and triumphant was this defence of the Church, that, at the succeeding General Conference, the persons who had been expelled made a formal confession of the impropriety of their conduct, and would have been received again into the Church, had not the ambition of a few leading men, to be at the head of a sect, defeated the conciliatory arrangement.

The overwhelming effect of the “Narrative and Defence” has at length imposed upon the doctor the hopeless task of counteracting its influence. He commences by a fanciful account of the previous arrangements for the prosecution, which we shall presently show to be wholly unfounded; and then proceeding to the circumstances of the trial itself, he endeavours to show that the whole proceeding was unfair, because, as he alleges, the Church being divided into two parties, the reformers could not be fairly tried. Finally, the doctor proceeds to a formal justification of all the slander and calumny contained in the extracts from the *Mutual Rights*, which had been published in the “Narrative and Defence” as the grounds of impeachment before the Church judicatories.

We shall patiently follow the doctor through his elaborate defence, if he concludes it in any reasonable time. The hypothetical account of preliminary arrangements for the prosecution, and the special pleading on the nature and circumstances of the trial, are already before us, and

will furnish us with matter enough for a few numbers; meantime the doctor is toiling through the bog and mire of the extracts with the most commendable painstaking industry. If we should never overtake him, it may be no disadvantage to the reader, as no sophistry can conceal or disguise the falsity and wickedness of the writings for which the doctor and his friends have been excluded from the Methodist communion.

The preliminary remarks of the reviewer are all intended to impress the reader with the opinion that he was expelled from the Church because he differed in opinion with his brethren on the subject of Church government. It is of the utmost importance to his cause to establish this position, and, accordingly, no pains have been spared to establish it; for if such were the fact, it must be owned that it could not be justified either by the Scriptures or Methodist Discipline. The position, however, rests solely upon the assertion of those whose interest it is to sustain it. Those who preferred the charges against the doctor disavowed any wish to interfere with the rights of private judgment; neither did they wish to restrain the prudent expression of opinion, either by speech or writing. It was the licentious exercise of these rights of which they complain. It is therefore all lost labour to prove the impropriety of expelling reformers for their opinions on Church government, or for the arguments by which they publicly sustained their opinions; because the doctrine is admitted—no one controverts it: and therefore the only debatable question is, *Were the means taken* by the reviewer and his associates, to carry their views into effect, in accordance with the obligations imposed by our holy religion? Can they justify the bitter reviling of our ministry, which abounds in the periodical party paper which they published with so much zeal? Can they sustain the accusations against the living and the dead, which they have uttered with a fierceness and a rancour which would scarcely be tolerated in political partisans? If they can, why we have been wrong in expelling them. If they cannot, then we are justified in the sight of God and man; we could do no less than expel them, seeing they refused all atonement for their offences, or even to promise amendment.

But the doctor thinks we had taken alarm at the progress of reform principles, and therefore resolved to expel the reformers in Baltimore, in order to prevent the propagation of their opinions in the Church. And was it not time to take the alarm, seeing they had already organized "*imperium in imperio*," a government within a government—a secret society, in which demagogues were permitted to denounce and defame the best men in the Church, and inflame the passions of the simple men whom they had decoyed into their associations, against their pastors, whom they represented as tyrants and despots, aiming not only at ecclesiastical, but civil domination? Was it not cause of alarm to see an editorial com-

mittee elected by the parent of these secret societies, publishing a periodical paper, in which the most holy and useful ministers of the Church were held up to public odium and scorn, as guilty of the basest hypocrisy, falsehood, and even forgery; and the whole body of our travelling ministry as so utterly and hopelessly depraved, as to be "*willing to suffer their flocks to go into sin, and finally into hell, rather than grant them their rights?*" Doctor Jennings himself had very emphatically announced to us the danger the Church was in, some years before his expulsion. He had advertised us at a local conference, that "a train had been laid from Georgia to Maine, and it only required the application of the match to blow up the whole concern;" and the temper and spirit in which the "Mutual Rights" was conducted, gave certain evidence that there were not wanting persons to apply the match, and rejoice at the fatal explosion. We believe there were few of the friends of the Church who did not look with apprehension on the revolutionary efforts which were everywhere in progress, but the doctor gives us credit for too much sagacity and forecast, when he attributes to us such maturity of arrangement and unity of purpose in the proceedings which took place in Baltimore.

Among the previous arrangements for the prosecution, the doctor reiterates the assertion, that the whole proceedings originated with the bishops. This assertion, so confidently made at first, was pointedly and positively contradicted in the "Narrative and Defence;" and although it is now so confidently repeated, it is not, and never has been, sustained by one particle of evidence. If the suspicion was natural to one heated as the writer was by party strife at the time he first admitted it, what excuse shall we make for persisting in the declaration after the assurances which have been given that he was wholly mistaken? Are the brethren who conducted the prosecution so entirely destitute of moral honesty as to be unworthy of credence, when they testify to a plain matter of fact in which they could not be mistaken? Such an imputation would betray, in any one who made it, a total recklessness in regard to his own reputation. Yet, in the sixth page of the Narrative and Defence, they say, "It has been alleged that we acted under the influence of ministerial authority—that we obeyed the dictum of the preacher in charge, while he himself was put in motion by persons at a distance high in authority." This charge has been made by Dr. Jennings in his Protest, and has been reiterated here and elsewhere. We can only meet this charge with a positive and unqualified denial. We *know* that the measures taken in relation to the accused did not originate with the preacher in charge, nor do we believe that he was even informed that such measures were in contemplation until they were resolved upon; and as to the bishops, who, we suppose, were intended by the "persons at a distance high in authority," we are sure the proceedings must have considerably progressed before

they were informed of them at all. But men whose responsibilities sit so easily upon them, may make what assertions they please. The fact is, that although the "Union Society" would persuade the public that the lay members of our Church are tyrannized over by their ministers, and are dissatisfied with the government, and that it is the cause of their lay brethren that they are so strenuously pleading, yet it is by these very lay brethren that they have been arraigned and brought to trial, and that, too, without any itinerant suggestion whatever.

Among the circumstances to which the doctor resorts to sustain his allegation against the bishops, is one which, in order to derive the necessary aid from it, he is obliged to misrepresent entirely. Speaking of the proceedings of the district conference, he says, "It gave me but little concern that the colored men also had been enlisted against us. But the transaction went far to satisfy me that I had taken a true view of the object of the men in power, and that I was correct in my former declaration, that the prosecution was put in motion by persons at a distance high in authority. Some objection was made to the propriety of calling on the coloured preachers to vote in the case, when one of them arose and declared, in justification of his right, that he and others had waited on the bishop *when he was last in the city*, and the 'bishop told us,' said he, 'to go to this conference and insist on our rights, for we had as good a right to vote as any man in the conference, and if he were in the chair he would call to order and put down any man who would oppose our right to vote.' By this honest declaration of the coloured man it came out, not only that the bishop approved the prosecutions, but that, if he did not assist in projecting the plan for dissolving the district conference, he knew it was intended, and gave it the aid of his authoritative influence over the coloured preachers. The transaction afforded proof of a concerted design, in which the bishop, presiding elder, the preacher in charge of West Baltimore station, and the whole body of official men, *had conspired to secure our condemnation.*"

Now, what will the reader think of the doctor's "*proof*" of this terrible conspiracy, when he learns that this coloured preacher *did not* say that he and his brethren had held a conference with the bishop *the last time he was in the city*; but that the conference to which he alluded was held with one of the bishops soon after the organization of the district conference, which was several years before the occasion of voting on the doctor's case had occurred, and before it could possibly have been anticipated. Again: the only bishop who had been in the city since the prosecution then pending had been determined upon, or even designed, was the Rev. E. George, and it was not to him that the coloured preacher alluded at all. When the conversation with the bishop was held, there could have been no design to dissolve the district conference; for it was previous to its

having been tested by experiment, and the coloured preachers were anxious to be instructed as to the privileges they might claim under the rule establishing these conferences. We wish we could apologize for the above palpable misstatement of fact, by supposing that the doctor had, under the excitement of the occasion, misunderstood the coloured preacher; and such was our opinion when the doctor and his party published their Protest against the dissolution of the conference, immediately after the occurrence, in which they make the same mistake, except that they make the coloured preacher say, "*when the bishop was in town,*" while the doctor makes him say, "*we called on the bishop when he was last in the city.*" But we are not at liberty now to suppose the doctor mistaken, for, in the reply to the Protest alluded to above, the meaning of the coloured preacher was explained; and if the explanation had been doubted, the coloured preacher who made the remarks was always at hand to answer any inquiry on the subject. The local preachers who voted for a dissolution of the conference, say, in their reply to the Protest, "We are told in the 'Review,' that one of the coloured men said in the conference, 'we are aware of our privileges, for when the bishop was in town, HE told us to go to the conference and insist upon our rights, for we had as good a right to vote as any man in the conference, and if he were in the chair he would call to order and put down any man who should oppose our right to vote.' We are certain, however, that the coloured preacher stated, that the coloured men were not *careful* to insist upon their right to vote, and especially upon questions in which the characters of white men were involved; and we think also, he added, that in this last particular, they were governed not only by their own sense of propriety, but also by the advice of a bishop. We have noticed this allusion to a bishop, however, chiefly to do away the impression which has been made by it—namely, that the advice had been given by Bishop George, when last in Baltimore, a little before the session of the district conference, and with reference to the cases which would necessarily come before that body. The advice was given some years ago by another bishop, on application made to him by the coloured preachers, for his opinion as to their privileges in the conference under the Discipline, and therefore could not have been intended to bear on circumstances which at that time could not have been foreseen."

Has the doctor adopted new views of moral duty, as well as new opinions on Church government? How else could he for party purposes reiterate a charge against so good a man as Bishop George, which first, perhaps, originated in mistake, but which had been so clearly disproved that not a shadow of probability remained. We confess, when we look at the many erroneous statements in the doctor's review, we are half inclined to adopt the maxim of the great English moralist, "Faction seldom leaves a man honest, however it may *find* him."

We have shown that the only fact adduced by the doctor, in support of his charge against the bishops, is assumed and gratuitous; that the coloured preacher did not, and could not say what the doctor alleges he said, and, moreover, had it been said, it would have been untrue. Of all this our reviewer had been apprized; and yet, with the hardihood of a true partisan, he fearlessly reasserts it all, and even ventures to add a very important *improvement* to the statement formerly given by himself and his associates in their Protest. But we are told by the doctor, that "at least one-half the subscribers to the 'Mutual Rights' have not had sufficient opportunity to be informed, as their names were not on the list when the fourth volume of the Mutual Rights, which contains the principal documents, was published;" and perhaps most of the *original* subscribers have derived their information, in reference to this controversy, exclusively from the "Mutual Rights," and therefore the doctor might safely say what he pleased. We shall adduce, in the sequel, still further evidence that he is not at all scrupulous in availing himself of this advantage.

Having, as he supposes, fixed upon the bishops the charge of originating and authoritatively dictating the prosecution, the doctor proceeds to the arrangements for the tragedy. The next agents in the fearful conspiracy, we are told, were the Rev. J. Frye, presiding elder, and the Rev. J. M. Hanson, the preacher in charge of the station; who, it is alleged, were "put in motion by men at a distance high in authority;" and who, in obedience to their orders, enlisted the official members of the Church in this crusade against liberty—the "concerted design, in which the bishop, the presiding elder, the preacher in charge of West Baltimore station, and the whole body of official men, had conspired to procure the condemnation" of reformers.

So heavy a charge against such men as Joseph Frye and James M. Hanson ought not to be admitted without good evidence; yet the doctor seems to expect it to be credited upon his *ipse dixit* alone. He does not affect to offer either facts or testimony to sustain his allegation, but asserts it with a confident assurance, which could only have been warranted by indubitable evidence. We are sincerely sorry to place the doctor in so disadvantageous a light before the public; but we should be unjust to other men, of at least equal importance in society, if we failed to expose the injustice with which he has assailed them. The matter stands thus:—It had been a primary object with Dr. Jennings, and others confederated with him, to effect a revolution in our Church. To accomplish this purpose, they deemed it necessary to destroy the confidence which the membership reposed in their itinerant ministers, by representing them as tyrants, despots, popes, &c. He had been accused by certain laymen of the Church of evil-speaking, of railing, and of endeavouring to sow dissension among his brethren. The accusation had been brought before the

proper judicatories of the Church by laymen, and he was expelled. But in conformity with his original plan of operations, it was now of great importance to represent this prosecution as the work of these tyrants, despots, and popes; and as the agency of the laymen could not be denied, he found it necessary to represent the bishops and other itinerant ministers as secretly instigating the laity to action. At first this was only insinuated, and the insinuation was met by a plain and positive denial; yet, after more than two years have elapsed, the insinuation is substituted by a broad and unqualified assertion, unsustained by one tittle of evidence, either positive or circumstantial.

This cannot be permitted to pass without reprehension. The doctor must either sustain his charge by evidence, or forfeit his reputation with the public. The allegation he makes is no trivial matter. If true, it would be considered by reformers as not only an act of tyranny, but as a mean, unmanly exercise of influence, which would render its authors unworthy of public trust or private confidence; and we confess that, differing with them in almost everything else, we should agree with them in these sentiments. But we defy the whole body of our enemies in this matter. There is not a shadow of evidence, or even probability, in the charge. The bishops, so far from having dictated the measures taken in relation to those who have been expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore, were not apprised of them until the trials before the several committees had terminated, and therefore could not have dictated anything in reference to them, either to the presiding elder or the preacher in charge. Bishop George, it will be recollected, came to town after the laymen had been expelled, and the local preachers had been suspended by the several committees. On his way to the city he got the first intimation of the state of affairs here, and we know from his own declaration that he doubted the propriety of the proceedings until some time after his arrival. As to the other bishops, we believe the first intelligence of the proceedings which reached them was through the press, which we all remember groaned with protests and defences, written and published by the doctor and his friends, before the higher judicatories had convened. In reference to the bishops, therefore, the doctor's charge, though so positively made, is wholly untrue; nor is he more fortunate in his allegation against the presiding elder and the preacher in charge. The former had no part or lot in the matter, until it was brought before him as president of the district conference; nor had the latter any agency in the affair until compelled by his official duty to act upon the formal accusation presented by some of the most respectable lay members of the Church. If it be alleged that for these assertions we offer no proof, we answer, it is not expected of us to prove a negative. The *onus probandi* rests with the accuser. We call upon the doctor for *his* proofs. If he

allege that the nature of the case renders it difficult to procure the necessary testimony, we shall admit the plea, but it will afford no excuse or palliation for the unfeeling and injurious accusation he has made without any proof at all. Unless the proof be given, the doctor will not only stand convicted of bearing false witness against his neighbour, but the whole plan of his review is frustrated. He will have failed to show the "overbearing act of abandoned tyranny," which he would fix upon the ministry; and the truth of the declaration contained in the Narrative and Defence, which he affects to disbelieve, remains unmoved and immovable—namely, that "the fact is, that although the Union Society would persuade the public that the lay members of our Church are tyrannized over by their ministers, and are dissatisfied with the government, and that it is the cause of their lay brethren that they are so strenuously pleading, yet it is by these very lay brethren that they have been arraigned and brought to trial; and that, too, without any itinerant suggestion or influence whatever."

Having disposed of the charges against the bishops, presiding elder, and preacher in charge of the station, let us inquire whether the conspiracy of "*the whole body of official men to secure the condemnation*" of the doctor and his friends is better sustained.

The reader will recollect that the official body against whom the allegation is made, consists of near one hundred persons; that some of these are connected by ties of consanguinity with some of those who were expelled, and that most of the members of this body were upon terms of intimacy and friendship with the leading reformers up to the time of their expulsion. Under such circumstances, the doctor will have it that a secret conspiracy had been concerted by "the whole body of official men," to expel him and his friends at the bidding of the bishops, the presiding elder, and preacher in charge; and that all the preparatory arrangements were made without any part of the secret escaping, except just so much as the "whole body" chose to make public. Now, in the doctor's own language, "Is not this a queer thing?" It can find no parallel, except in freemasonry, if indeed the freemasons have any secrets which concern anybody but themselves. These secret preparations, according to the doctor's account, occupied several months, and were perfected with an ability and forecast which would have done credit to a Talleyrand or a Metternich. Even the "Narrative and Defence" was prepared long before the events it records, and the proceedings it defends, had transpired; and the extracts from the Mutual Rights which make the "pith" of the book, he is "fully satisfied" were made, and he thinks were shown to the bishops before their mandate was issued. What a pity the doctor had not turned his attention to writing romances! His imagination might then have indulged in such fictions without any detriment to his veracity; and this supposed conspiracy would have furnished the incidents of a



tragical story worthy of his genius. But as he professes to be serious, the reader will naturally inquire upon what evidence the statements are founded. The evidence, however, is not furnished; but the doctor positively asserts the whole to be true, and he will think the reader very querulous if he does not believe upon such authority.

The first thing the conspirators found it necessary to do, was “*to find some one, a fast friend to the government of the Church, with sufficient zeal, and a competent degree of ingenuity, so to manage matters, that in the event of a refusal on the part of reformers to receive the dictates of the intended prosecutors, and a consequent recourse to expulsion, the Methodist Episcopal community and the world might be made to believe that the Church took no authoritative step to prevent reform; that the prosecutions were entered upon, and carried into effect, by lay brethren, ‘without any itinerant suggestion or influence whatever;’ they (the lay brethren) being offended, not with our labours to bring about reform, but with the manner in which we were endeavouring to accomplish our object.*”

The reader will agree with us, that to find a person with “a competent degree of ingenuity” to do all this, before the proceedings had taken place—to write the history of a war before the declaration of it, and to defend the measures resorted to by one of the belligerents throughout the whole war, before any of these measures had been adopted—would be no easy task. Yet the person was found, we are told; and the prosecutors had their courage screwed up by reading their defence before they had commenced their operations! Gentle reader, will you do the doctor the favour just to swallow this camel? Pray don’t boggle at it, for we shall have heavier demands upon your complaisance presently. The doctor is an intrepid writer, and has as little compassion for his reader as for his antagonist. The “Narrative and Defence” had placed him in so unfavourable a light before the community, that some desperate effort was necessary to recover the vantage-ground he had taken, by giving his defence to the world before his trial had terminated; and having resolutely determined to do or die, he is not at all particular as to the means he employs.

The allusion in the above paragraph was intended as a personal insult. The person who assisted the brethren who conducted the prosecution in preparing their defence, never concealed his agency in the matter. It was known to everybody who took any interest in the affair, and to none better than to Dr. Jennings. We do not, therefore, hesitate to say, that he has, in the above declaration, wantonly assailed the reputation of a man who had never intentionally injured him in any other way than by defending the Church to which he belonged against the assaults of her enemies; that, in order to avenge himself for this opposition, the doctor has asserted what is positively untrue. The extracts which compose the “pith” of the Narrative and Defence, were, it is true, made by

the person to whom he alludes,\* and the comments were written by him ; but neither the one nor the other were ever shown to the bishops, nor to the brethren who met at William Brown's. The writer was not at that meeting at all ; and not a single extract was made by him, not a commentary, nor a single line of the Narrative and Defence written, (except the documents which are necessarily incorporated in it,) until after the whole proceedings had terminated. What, then, will the generous reader think of this attack upon the writer of the Narrative and Defence ? The obvious design of it cannot be misunderstood. He is to be represented as having been so anxious for the expulsion of reformers, as to prepare a book showing how their expulsion could be defended and justified ; and then as urging others to take the measures he had not the courage to pursue himself. And all this is alleged, not only unjustly, but without the least scintilla of evidence to support it. The accuser tells us he is fully satisfied of the fact ; but what has produced this satisfaction he has not condescended to say, except that he tells us of a conversation with Mr. Harden, (one of the prosecutors,) from which he infers that the Narrative and Defence was written before the proceedings which it records had taken place.

"I am not informed," says the doctor, "with positive certainty, that the entire plan of the intended book was laid antecedent to the appointment of the seven prosecutors ; but I am fully satisfied that *some one* or more had been employed in making the selections from the Mutual Rights which constitute the pith of the Narrative and Defence. It is very probable that they were made and submitted to the five bishops, and some other distinguished travelling preachers, who were in the city a short time before the first caucus was held at Mr. William Brown's. And I cannot avoid the supposition, that it was previously understood that this selection in the intended form of the Narrative and Defence, when it should appear, would serve to justify a course of prosecutions and expulsions, if that should become 'necessary' for the accomplishment of their object. The knowing ones had their eyes on this when they met at Dr. Roszell's school-room. And when I called on Mr. Harden, and took occasion to intimate the possibility of scandal to the Methodist Episcopal Church, if they should go on with their contemplated prosecutions, he said to me in reply, 'We are prepared to meet all consequences ; and when we shall have wound up our proceedings, and laid before the public such extracts from the Mutual Rights, &c., as we shall be able to make, together with our comment upon them, we have no doubt about being sustained by the public.'"

In the preceding remarks we have shown the falsity and absurdity of all that is said about the preparation of the Narrative and Defence before

\* Many of the papers from which the extracts were made, had been indicated previously in the charges exhibited against Dr. Jennings and his associates.

the proceedings it details and defends had transpired; and in the latter clause of the above extract, the reader will see all that the doctor relies upon to sustain his assertion. Mr. Harden, he alleges, spoke in anticipation of extracts from the Mutual Rights, and certain commentaries which were to be laid before the public. But if we admit the doctor's version of this conversation, it will not sustain him; for, by his own account, Mr. H. spoke only of extracts which *were yet to be made*, not of any that were already prepared. By what mode of reasoning, then, does the doctor arrive at the conclusion, that the extracts and commentaries had been prepared so early as the spring of 1827, "when the five bishops were in town," when the conversation with Mr. H. did not take place until the following autumn? But the following certificate will show that Mr. Harden did not, in the conversation alluded to, say one word about extracts from the Mutual Rights, or commentaries upon them, or intimate any intention to publish anything upon the subject of the proceedings before the Church. Of this we are sure, because the first suggestion of the necessity of such a measure was given to Mr. H. by the writer of these remarks, when Mr. H., in his own counting-room, showed him the advertisement in the newspapers, announcing Dr. J.'s protest. Mr. H. at once admitted the propriety of the suggestion, and immediately wrote the following advertisement, which, after being signed by the other brethren who were associated with him in the prosecution, was published in the newspapers:—

"Dr. Samuel K. Jennings having endeavoured to forestall the opinion of the Methodist public, by publishing the proceedings in his case, before the decision of the committee could be known, all who feel any concern in the matter are respectfully requested to suspend their judgment until the proceedings shall have terminated, when a plain statement of the whole affair will be published.

GEORGE EARNEST,  
JACOB ROGERS,  
ISAAC N. TOY,  
SAMUEL HARDEN,  
ALEXANDER YEARLEY,  
JOHN BERRY,  
FIELDER ISRAEL."

The promise made in the above advertisement, was subsequently fulfilled to the letter. The "Narrative and Defence" grew out of a pledge to the public, occasioned by Dr. Jennings's protest, and had not been previously prepared, or even thought of. Let it be remembered, that the doctor's protest was published some time after his conversation with Mr. H., and therefore Mr. Harden *could not*, in that conversation, allude to the publication of extracts and commentaries, for the best of all rea-

sons, namely, because no publication on the subject was then intended, or had ever been proposed.

We have been furnished with the following certificate by Mr. Harden, which, we think, settles the matter beyond all controversy :—

“Dr. Jennings has published, in the *Mutual Rights*, an account of a conversation with me, in which he attributes to me some remarks which I positively declare were not made. I did not allude in that conversation to any intention to publish anything whatever on the subject of the proceedings before the Church, on charges preferred by myself and others against Dr. J. and his associates; such an intention did not exist at that time. It was first suggested by the advertisement in the newspapers announcing Dr. J.'s protest, which was published some time after my conversation with him. I appeal to all who were concerned with me in these measures for the truth of my declaration, that we had not designed to publish a *Narrative and Defence*, or extracts from the *Mutual Rights* with commentaries, until we were compelled to promise a plain statement of the whole affair, in order to obviate the effect of Dr. J.'s protest, which was published before the trial had terminated, and which we thought gave a very unfair representation of the matter.

“I further declare, that the extracts from the *Mutual Rights*, with the commentaries upon them, which were published in the ‘*Narrative and Defence*,’ were prepared after the trials had terminated; that they were read to myself and those associated with me, from time to time, as they were written and amended according to our suggestions: so that nothing can be more erroneous than Dr. J.'s supposition, that the extracts and commentaries were either seen or written before the proceedings before the judicatories of the Church had been concluded. In this I cannot be mistaken; for the copy of the *Mutual Rights* from which the extracts were made, was procured for me, and put into the hands of the writer of the *Narrative and Defence*, after the trials were ended.

“BALTIMORE, *December*, 18, 1830.

SAMUEL HARDEN.”

It appears, then, that the doctor's memory in regard to this conversation has been wonderfully assisted by two years' cogitation. He had, during the incipient state of the proceedings, insisted that the prosecution *was not designed to be followed up*. Those engaged in it would not dare to push things to extremities. They only designed to frighten reformers, and deter them from publishing the *Mutual Rights*, and to induce them to dissolve the Union Society. When, however, the proceedings *were* followed up to the final expulsion of the doctor and his associates, and the *Narrative and Defence* so fairly and unanswerably justified the measure, he persuaded himself that it must have been prepared before the prosecution commenced; and that it was this work, got up by “*one who was a fast friend to the*

*government of the Church, with sufficient zeal and a competent degree of ingenuity,"* which inspired the prosecutors with courage to accuse and arraign such great men, backed as they were by a host of satellites "in the full tide of successful experiment."

It will be perceived that the comparative estimate which is to be made of the different statements given by Mr. H. and Dr. J. of their conversation is not to be settled by the comparative accuracy of the memories of these gentlemen. Accurate and retentive as Mr. Harden's memory is known to be, his recollection of the matter is corroborated and rendered indubitable by the fact that he could not advert to a publication which he had never thought of, and which had never been suggested to him by any person whatever. Thus is the feeble prop taken away from the mighty superstructure which the doctor had reared with so much pains and labour. It has turned out, like most of the doctor's projects, a castle in the air.

The doctor, it will be remembered, accuses the bishops with authoritatively dictating the prosecution; but we have shown that they were not even informed of the intention of those who conducted the prosecution, nor of the proceedings, until they had considerably progressed.

The presiding elder and preacher in charge are accused of obeying the dictum of the bishops; but the bishops could not have dictated measures of which they were unapprized. Moreover, it is well known that the presiding elder would willingly have avoided the only part which he took in the affair, as president of the district and quarterly-meeting conferences. If his advice had been followed, the whole proceedings would have been stayed until after the ensuing session of the General Conference. Not that he doubted the justice of the measure, but he thought the expediency of it at least questionable. These sentiments he frequently uttered at the time, without any reserve, and therefore he could not have been in the conspiracy; neither could the preacher in charge have been "put in motion by men at a distance high in authority." He had, as we have heretofore seen, received no orders from them. But he did his duty. He received the accusation when presented by men of the highest standing in the Church, and, according to the Discipline, brought the offenders to trial. They were tried by their peers and finally expelled, and the sentence has been ratified by all who have examined the proceedings with candour and impartiality; the doctor's protest to the contrary notwithstanding.

As a specimen of Dr. J.'s fairness and candour, we will call the reader's attention to a note which he appends to the passage we have quoted at the commencement of this article. He quotes the following passage from the Narrative and Defence: "And as to the bishops, who we suppose were intended by the 'persons at a distance high in authority,' we are sure that the proceedings must have considerably progressed before they were informed of it at all;" and then remarks, "By their own acknowledgment

it would seem then that much preparatory work was done before the bishops were in the city at that time," namely, in the spring of 1827.

With great deference for the doctor's logic, we think this a *non sequitur*—a conclusion which does not follow from the premises. We had said that the proceedings had considerably progressed before the bishops heard of them. The proceedings commenced in the fall of 1827. The bishops had not been in town since the previous spring. How then does it follow that much preparatory work had been done before their visit? It follows, on the contrary, that *nothing* had been done, or they would have been informed of it. The doctor talks of "competent ingenuity;" but the ingenuity which could represent a positive denial of a fact as an "acknowledgment of it" is "competent" to anything which may suit a party purpose.

We shall, hereafter, show that in reference to other individuals, the doctor has been as unfair and unjust in his statements, as he has been in the case of the "bishops, the presiding elder, the preacher in charge, and the whole body of official men."

Having slyly assigned to Dr. Bond the contrivance and arrangement of the fearful conspiracy against the reformers, Dr. Jennings now introduces him as condescending to manage an underplot, by proposing terms of compromise to the Union Society, which were afterwards to make a figure in the Narrative and Defence. We shall give Dr. Jennings's own account of this affair, that the reader, who may not have the "Mutual Rights" of March 5, 1830, by him, may not be deprived of the opportunity of giving due consideration to the heavy charge, as well as the very different account which we shall give of the transaction. We ask of our readers a calm and deliberate examination of this matter; because, if injustice has been done an individual, either by misrepresenting his actions, or unjustly impugning his intentions, there is no other tribunal to which we can appeal, in this case, but that of public opinion; and however exalted the station Dr. Jennings may occupy as a reformer, he cannot place himself out of the reach of this tribunal. If we fail to show, that in the present instance he has misrepresented both actions and intentions in respect to Dr. Bond, and that he has done so *knowingly*,—yes, reader, knowingly,—with all the necessary evidences of the whole truth before him, then let his accusations be sustained, and the guilty suffer the odium he deserves; but if we do show it—clearly, satisfactorily show it—why, then let the shafts of malice recoil on him who hurled them. The following is the passage in Dr. Jennings's Review, to which we wish to call the reader's particular attention, viz.:—

"But before the trials commenced, Dr. Bond took occasion, on his own responsibility, to offer terms to the Union Society, which, if accepted, he ventured to engage for the prosecutions that they should be dismissed." (See Narrative and Defence, pp. 81, 82.)

"The first intention of this overture was, if the Union Society would agree to meet it with their approbation, to accomplish the same objects, [heretofore spoken of,] the dissolution of the society, and the destruction or neutralization of the 'Mutual Rights.' 'The Union Society shall be dissolved,' said he, in his proposals, 'and not reorganized in the present or any other form.' And all papers intended for publication in the Mutual Rights, 'shall be submitted to three persons chosen mutually, by the reformers and the committee who have preferred charges against some of them, who shall be authorized to expunge all objectionable passages therefrom.' Of course no paper could have been published, unless it had the approbation of men in the confidence of the worst enemies of reform; and every candid reader must see, that such an arrangement was more offensive than the demands made by the prosecutors themselves. *What man, not under the influence of blind passion*, could have proposed to his fellow-citizens terms so degrading? But these propositions were not terms of brotherly compromise, offered in the true spirit of conciliation. Charges were already preferred against us, and the dread consequences of excommunication were held up, *in terrorem*, over our heads; so that *these appearances of accommodation were in reality inquisitorial dictation of the most offensive kind, made the more repulsive by the obliquity which marked the manner of their introduction.*"

"There was also a second intention in making these overtures. If the Union Society should reject these terms, then this *kindly* interference of the doctor was to make a fine figure in the Narrative and Defence, and be additional proof of the '*obstinacy*' of reformers."

The first objection we have to make to this statement of the reviewer, is, that it is not true that Dr. Bond made overtures to the Union Society, "*which, if accepted, he ventured to engage for the prosecutions that they should be dismissed.*" And, moreover, that the misrepresentation is made by Dr. Jennings, with the very propositions to the Union Society before him, for he quotes the page of the Narrative and Defence which contains them; and that so far from engaging that the prosecutions should be dismissed upon the acceptance of the conditions, Dr. Bond only promises "*to use his personal influence (so far as that small influence might extend) in procuring a suspension of the proceedings before the Church.* And lest this promise should go for more than it is worth, he adds: "*In making this proposition, I wish it to be distinctly understood that I act alone, and as a mediator; and that I have not consulted with any of the old-side brethren on the subject, nor with any reformer, except brother J. S. Reese.*"

But having given a full-length quotation of what Doctor Jennings has said in reference to Dr. Bond, and his propositions to the Union Society, we will give from the Narrative and Defence, and from the page quoted by Doctor Jennings, too, the communication made by Dr. Bond to the

Union Society, with the observations by which they are accompanied in that pamphlet. (See Narrative and Defence, pp. 81, 82.)

"After these charges had been laid before the preacher in charge of the station, Doctor Bond, who had not yet relinquished the hope that some conciliatory course might be devised, by which the necessity of further proceedings before the constituted authorities of the Church might be removed, *and who had not heretofore taken any part in the measures which had been adopted in reference to the accused, ventured alone and without our knowledge upon the business of negotiation.* Having a particular intimacy with the Rev. J. S. Reese, [a local-preacher reformer,] and reposing great confidence in his understanding, piety, and prudence, the doctor communicated his intentions to him. Mr. Reese met the offer with readiness, and promised to be the bearer of any proposals the doctor might be disposed to make to the Union Society. Accordingly the following proposals were sent; to wit:—

"September 15th, 1827.

"Whereas, the Union Society of reformers have assigned as their motive in forming the association, the attainment of unanimity in their intended memorial or petition to the next General Conference; and whereas that object is expected to be accomplished by the General Convention of reformers, which is to take place in November next, I am disposed to use my personal influence to procure (so far as that small influence may extend) a suspension of proceedings before the Church, upon the following conditions, to wit:—

"*First.* When the convention shall have terminated its session, the Union Society shall be dissolved, and not reorganized, in the present or any other form, until after the next General Conference.

"*Secondly.* That the periodical called the "Mutual Rights," if continued at all, shall be strictly confined (so far as relates to the controversy with respect to our Church government) to dispassionate, temperate discussion; and that no allusions to individuals, or attributions of improper motives to any individuals or to the rulers of the Church, shall at any time hereafter appear in that periodical.

"To secure the fulfilment of the last condition, each number of that work, in the proof-sheets or the materials before they are printed, shall be submitted to three persons *chosen mutually* by the reformers and the *committee* who have preferred charges against some of them, who shall be authorized to expunge all objectionable passages therefrom.

"In making this proposition I wish it to be distinctly understood that I act alone and as a mediator; and that I have not consulted with any of the old-side brethren on the subject, nor with any reformer except brother John S. Reese.

THOMAS E. BOND.

"To Rev. J. S. REESE."



"The Rev. Mr. Reese returned the above proposals, stating that the paper had been read in the Union Society, but that no order had been taken upon it, nor was he authorized in any way to continue the negotiation." It is needless to add, that the doctor relinquished his hopes, and did not again tender his mediation. We have heard it objected to the above proposals, that they were not official, but the mere propositions of an individual, and therefore could not be received by the Union Society. But it must be obvious, that in this stage of the business no official propositions could be made by the Church authorities, because it had not been officially determined that any offence had been committed, much less had the nature of the offence, and the satisfaction due to the Church, been ascertained: any compromise, then, which could take place, must be between the accusers and the accused; and between these the doctor proposed to become the mediator.

"If the terms were objectionable, they might have been modified, had the negotiation continued. They were obviously only propositions of compromise, and might have been properly met by propositions from those to whom they were offered, and ultimately the negotiation might have terminated in a way mutually acceptable.

"But the fact is, the proposition was received as the effect of intimidation. It was thought, by the leading members of the Union Society, that the measures already taken were not intended to be followed up. The Church authorities, it was believed, would not dare to proceed to extremities; and if we are not misinformed, the doctor's proposals were styled, in the Union Society, 'a flag of truce,' and treated with the utmost contempt and derision."

That the reader may have, at one view, the contrast between what Dr. Jennings charges Dr. Bond with promising, and what he did, in fact, promise, we will place the statements in opposite columns, and then, if the reader finds Dr. Bond guilty of the charge, he is heartily welcome to give what credence he pleases to the motives by which he is represented as having been actuated:—

#### DR. JENNINGS.

"But before the trials commenced, Dr. Bond took occasion, on his own responsibility, to offer terms to the Union Society, which, if accepted, *he ventured to engage for the prosecutions that they should be dismissed.*"—*See Narrative and Defence*, pp. 81, 82.

#### DR. BOND.

"I am disposed to use my personal influence to procure (so far as that small influence may extend) a suspension of proceedings before the Church, upon the following conditions:"—"In making this proposition, *I wish it to be distinctly understood that I act alone, and as a mediator, and that I have not consulted with any of the old-side brethren on the subject, nor with any reformer, except brother John S. Reese.*"

Now, whether my reader happens to be friend or foe, Episcopal Methodist or Methodist Protestant, I submit it to his honest decision, whether there is a word in Dr. Bond's communication to the Union Society, like engaging, on the acceptance of the conditions, that *the prosecutions should be dismissed?* On the contrary, could he have been more cautious in guarding against such an inference than by telling the society that he acted alone, as a mediator, and without counsel, advice, or concert; pledging only what little influence he might have to procure a suspension of the proceedings before the Church? Yet Dr. Jennings, with the propositions before him, positively and unequivocally asserts that they contained a pledge that the prosecutions *should be dismissed!* We positively declare that we have no pleasure in thus exposing the delinquencies of a man who once held so distinguished a rank in the Church. A sectarian triumph would be a poor compensation for the common injury which is thus inflicted upon our holy profession. There is no cause of rejoicing in the fall of a man who has made such high professions as Dr. Jennings; for, although it may lessen his ability to injure a particular branch of the Church, yet, at the same time, a weapon is placed in the hands of the scoffer at all religion, by which he assails, with effect, the common cause of Christianity itself. Nothing but imperious necessity could have induced us to make the exposure. We had no other alternative left us but to sink under the charges made against us, or to show that they were unfounded. If the doctor finds himself upon a bed of thorns, he must console himself with the reflection that he made it for himself.

But it may be asked, What motive could induce Dr. Jennings to misrepresent so entirely the propositions made by Dr. Bond to the Union Society? A little consideration will make the motive but too apparent. Dr. Bond had been represented as the secret agent of the bishops in getting up and sustaining the conspiracy—"the fast friend to the government of the Church, with sufficient zeal, and a competent degree of ingenuity," to prepare a Narrative and Defence beforehand, in order to show how the expulsion of reformers could be justified; and in perfect keeping with this allegation, he is now represented as having authority to dismiss the prosecution, and to say to the Church authorities, "Hitherto shall ye go, but no farther." How else could he engage, upon his own responsibility, that the prosecutions should be dismissed if his proposals were accepted?

Having imputed propositions as coming from Dr. Bond which he never made, Dr. Jennings next proceeds to assign the motives in which they originated.

The first design, he alleges, was "the dissolution of the Union Society, and the destruction or neutralization of the Mutual Rights."

It will be seen by reference to the propositions themselves, that they

only proposed the dissolution of the Union Society, after the object for which it was said to have been instituted should have been accomplished. It had always been alleged, that reformers had been compelled to form these associations in order to procure the necessary unanimity in their petition to the General Conference, the want of which had been found a serious objection to their petitions presented to the Conference of 1824. It was therefore proposed, as a measure of conciliation, that after this object should have been attained by the convention, which was to take place in November, the society should be dissolved until the result of their petition should be known, when, if their wishes were not met by the General Conference, the propositions allowed the reorganization of the society. Was there anything unfair in this? It was known to the reformers, that many of their brethren had fears that there existed other views in the formation of the Union Society; or, at least, that other views had entered into the motives for its perpetuation,—that some of the leaders had the dernier resort of secession steadily in view, and looked to these societies as a convenient organization for the fulfilment of ulterior designs. Was it not proper, then, to ask the society to give a proof of the sincerity of their professions, by dissolving the association after the professed object of their formation had been attained? Yet Dr. Jennings says it was “an inquisitorial dictation of the most offensive kind.” As to the destruction, or neutralization of the Mutual Rights, the doctor, we admit, knows best, whether restraining the editors within the bounds of “*dispassionate temperate discussion*,” and forbidding personal invective and abuse, would have destroyed or neutralized the periodical, which had so long rioted in the luxury of slander and defamation. If such would have been the effect of the restraints proposed, all that we have to plead in defence of the proposition is, that it looked to “a consummation devoutly to be wished” by every friend of truth and righteousness.

But it is alleged, that if these were the first intentions, there was an ulterior purpose which the author of the propositions had in view, and which was in perfect keeping with the rest of the conspiracy which he had formed—namely, “to procure the condemnation of reformers.” In the development of this “drama,” as the doctor calls it, it will be recollected that he alleges that a “Narrative and Defence” had been prepared at the outset by the author of these very propositions, and the conciliatory proposal, if rejected, would make a very pretty episode in the tragedy. “If the Union Society should reject the terms,” says the reviewer, “then this kindly interference of the doctor was to make a pretty figure in the ‘Narrative and Defence,’ and be additional proof of the obstinacy of reformers.” How mortifying it is to be obliged always to spoil the doctor’s pretty play with such obstinate, intractable things as matters of fact! But so it will always happen to writers of historical plays and romances. Some Mar-

plot will always be pointing out the anachronisms, the misnomers, and the contradictions of the true history of the matter. It will be recollected by the reader, that we have heretofore shown that the "Narrative and Defence" was not thought of until it was suggested by the doctor's protest; and this protest was published some time after the propositions were made to the Union Society by Dr. Bond. How, then, could the propositions be intended to make a fine figure in the "Narrative and Defence?" But why should Dr. Jennings infer any unworthy purpose from the propositions, or attribute any sinister design to their author? We answer, solely because Dr. Bond had written an "Appeal to the Methodists, in opposition to the changes proposed in their Church government;" and because he had called a meeting of the male members of the Church, who were not members of the Union Society, for the purpose of publishing, under their sanction, a defence of the Baltimore Annual Conference, which had been assailed in the "Mutual Rights," and through the medium of the newspapers, by Dr. J. and his associates, with the most shameful violence. From these two circumstances, Dr. J. inferred, that Dr. Bond had been selected by the bishops and their agents, to manage a conspiracy, for the purpose of expelling the reformers from the Church. And hence he could not believe he was sincere in his mediation: and if we have not been misinformed, Dr. J. himself effected the rejection of the propositions, calling them "a flag of truce," and treating them with the utmost contempt; so that they had no chance of a fair hearing by the society, over which he exercised at that time so much influence as to get the members, at a certain meeting, to pledge themselves not to comply, individually, with any terms which might be offered. So that, whatever they might afterwards hear which might go to change their views, they were not at liberty, even for conscience' sake, to make any individual concessions to the Church. They were to stand or fall together, right or wrong. We were not permitted, of course, to witness these transactions personally, but we were informed of them at the time; and it will be recollected, that the president of the society told the brethren who waited upon him, that it was useless to visit the members individually, as they had agreed not to withdraw from the Union Society.

It is stated in the Narrative and Defence, that at the time Dr. Bond made his propositions to the Union Society, he had taken no part in the measures which had been adopted in relation to the accused. Yet Dr. Jennings does not hesitate, in spite of the testimony of the seven brethren whose names are subscribed to the "Narrative and Defence," to represent him as the soul of the conspiracy. The declaration of these gentlemen would be taken by any jury which could be selected from among their fellow-citizens, exclusive of reformers; yet Dr. Jennings does not hesitate to contradict their statement, without the slightest evidence on which to

impugn their veracity. Their declaration, however, is literally true. Dr. Bond was so far from originating the prosecutions, that it is well known to all concerned in them, that he was opposed to them, from the advantage which he supposed the enemies of the Church would derive from the cry of persecution, which would be sounded throughout the continent, right or wrong. His plan was, fairly to write them down ; and he gave it as his opinion, even at the meeting in Dr. Roszell's school-room, that in so good a cause this could easily be done. He moreover expressed his concern that so little had been done to give those who had been carried away by the siren song of reform, an opportunity to form proper views of the proposed innovations on our Church economy. There were, however, wiser heads and firmer nerves in the Church, and the only measures, perhaps, which could have saved the Church were adopted, and pursued with a steadiness and propriety which did honour to those who devised, and to those who executed them. We know that the drawing up of the charges and specifications has been attributed to Dr. Bond. But whatever credit he may have derived from this opinion, he is compelled to relinquish it. He had no part nor lot in the matter, nor does he know who was the author of them, though he supposes they were drawn up by one of the brethren who preferred them. Doctor Jennings will, therefore, find that he has been stabbing at a man for a supposed offence, of which, in reality, he was entirely innocent ; and, after all his malignity, will perceive that the offer of mediation made to the Union Society might have been sincere and well-intended, notwithstanding the contumely with which he has treated it. We leave the doctor for the present to digest the repast we have provided for him ; and hereafter shall show that he has been as unfortunate in his strictures upon the conduct of Dr. Green, as he has in his attack upon Dr. Bond.

It will be recollected by our readers, that about the time of the session of the quarterly-meeting conference in this city, before which the trials of Dr. Jennings and his confederate local preachers were to take place, Dr. Green, of Virginia, arrived in Baltimore, and immediately opened a correspondence with Dr. Jennings, proposing to become a mediator between the Church and those who had been accused of violating her Discipline. This friendly interference he declared to be entirely voluntary, and unsolicited by any person or persons whatever. The declaration is to be found in his letters to Dr. Jennings, and we presume that all who know Dr. Green will deem his own word sufficient to establish the fact that he had not been sent for by any person nor solicited to interfere in any way with the pending prosecutions. Yet Dr. Jennings has the hardihood and cruelty to charge this minister of the gospel, whose character is without reproach, with double dealing and falsehood. He roundly asserts that "Dr. Green was sent for," and suffered himself to be made a tool of, permitting his

communications to be influenced or dictated by Dr. Bond, the agent of the bishops in this "conspiracy." From what we have seen of Dr. Green, he is not a man to be dictated to by anybody. He made up his mind as to his course before his arrival; and his first letter to Dr. Jennings was written before he had seen any person connected with the prosecutions on either side, and, we believe, before he had conversed with any member of the Church, except Mr. Charles A. Warfield, at whose house he stayed during his visit to Baltimore. So far was he from receiving instructions, that he positively declined conversation upon the subject, or disclosing his views until he should receive Dr. Jennings's reply; after which, if the reply afforded ground of hope, he said he should be glad to hold conversation with any person, of either side, on the subject of his proposed mediation. In all the doctor's deportment during his negotiation there was manifested a sincere desire to restore the accused brethren to the fellowship and confidence of the Church, if it should be found possible to do so without prostrating her wholesome discipline; and the illiberal attack upon his character and motives in Dr. J.'s review, is as unjust as it is ungenerous. That the reader may have the whole matter before him, we shall quote from the "Mutual Rights" of March 5th, 1830, the remarks in reference to Dr. Green, and then some extracts from Dr. Green's letters to Dr. Jennings, as published in the "Narrative and Defence." Dr. Jennings says:—

"For the same purposes, and to give still greater formality and notoriety to their pretensions to make peace, *Dr. Green was sent for*. They would then be prepared to say that these two doctors, both disinterested, had used their influence to prevail on the reformers to accept terms of reconciliation, but they had 'obstinately' rejected them both.

"Had Dr. Green come to use his influence in reviving the patience and meekness of our prosecutors; had he exerted himself to dissuade them from their tyrannical and repulsive proceedings, that they might seek an understanding with us, upon principles of equality and brotherly love, then indeed he would have merited the reputable appellation of a mediator. But, as he came to reiterate the same offensive propositions which were obviously intended to effect the utter destruction of reform, we were compelled to consider him *an insidious enemy*. And that his mediatorial propositions were drawn up under the influence and advice, if not the dictation, of Dr. Bond, *we can have no doubt*. A note was picked up among the papers swept from the conference room addressed to Dr. Bond, bearing date the same day that Dr. Green wrote his first letter. It was to inform Dr. Bond that Dr. Green had arrived, and to request him to come up to dinner, or soon afterwards. And although Dr. Green says, in his second letter, 'I set out from my family and my home with the intention to volunteer as a mediator in this case, without being solicited to do so by any one,'

yet the manner of this note, and other circumstances, have led me to believe that he was expected. A certain young man of the old side, whether advisedly or not, said he was sent for. If I could believe that he was not expected I would most readily; and I have no expectation that he will say he was not."—*Mutual Rights*, March 5, 1830.

In the above extract Dr. Jennings accuses Dr. Green of a downright falsehood in declaring that he "set out from his family and home with the intention to volunteer as a mediator in the case, *without being solicited to do so by any one*;" for he asserts positively, notwithstanding this declaration, that "*Dr. Green was sent for.*" But he does not think the doctor is so hardened as to persist in the falsehood, for he says he has "no expectation that he will say he was not expected." We, on the contrary, have no doubt of Dr. Green's saying what he has heretofore said upon this subject. All we know and all we have heard of that gentleman, goes to confirm us in the high opinion we have been led to entertain of his character. Whatever he has asserted will need no *other* confirmation, notwithstanding the ungenerous and unfeeling effort to impugn his veracity. His declarations in reference to his visiting this city, and the negotiation he conducted with so much benevolence and ability, will be seen by the following extracts from his letters, as published in the appendix to the Narrative and Defence.

Dr. Green's first letter to Dr. Jennings contains the following declarations:—"I have long viewed, with feelings of deep regret, the unfortunate schism in our Church in this city, and can no longer be an idle spectator of the melancholy scene. I have travelled near one hundred miles *to volunteer in the work of mediation* between the contending parties.

"I have not mentioned this subject to any of your stationed preachers.

"I take the whole responsibility of the correspondence upon myself.

"I shall defer my correspondence with my brethren on the side of the constituted authorities of the Church until I receive your answer, which I hope you will return by the bearer of this letter, or as soon as convenient."

In his second letter he says: "I am under the influence of no man. If all the men in Baltimore were to unite in one combination they could not induce me to take any course which my judgment did not approve.

"I assure you again that I am still acting on my own individual responsibility. I have no assurance that the Church will accede to the above terms; I only give it as my opinion that she ought to accede to them.

"I set out from my family and home with an intention to volunteer as a mediator in this case, without being solicited to do so by any one; but should God in his wisdom and goodness make me successful, I shall not rejoice alone. Hundreds of my brethren will rejoice with me! Yea, there will be joy among the angels in heaven."

These are Dr. Green's declarations in the premises, and we would ask if it was possible to say in stronger terms that he came here without solicitation, and obeyed neither the dictation nor the influence of any person or persons in the negotiation he had voluntarily undertaken? Yet the reviewer has "no expectation that he will say he was not expected."

Dr. Jennings in his reply to Dr. Green's first letter says, in reference to his proposal to offer himself as a mediator, "Judging from your letter, and *from what I have learned of your character*, perhaps there is no man in the Baltimore Conference who would be more kindly received by us all in that amiable capacity." What then has Dr. Jennings since known or heard of Dr. Green's character, to authorize him now to charge the man of whom he had been so favourably, and we will add, justly impressed, with the meanness of lending himself as a tool to others, and with dissimulation and falsehood in the mediation which he professed to undertake from the purest motives of Christian benevolence? This much is charged in the extract we have given; and there follows in the same number of the Mutual Rights, a letter to Dr. Green, which is said to have been written immediately after the failure of the negotiation, which Dr. Jennings "is not sure *was ever forwarded*," but which contains the most unjustifiable allegations against Dr. Green, charging him with the most culpable motives in the whole intention and management of his negotiation, and it is made a matter of great rejoicing that the reformers had escaped his "snare."

These are allegations of no ordinary moment. If true, the high standing which Dr. Green has heretofore sustained as a Christian and a minister, is gone forever. But if unfounded, what atonement can Dr. Jennings make to an abused public, to Dr. Green, and to his innocent, helpless children, upon whom any stain upon the reputation of their father must necessarily descend? We propose to examine the grounds upon which these allegations rest; and if the reader will give us his attention, we shall show these accusations to be as untrue as they are malignant.

The principal circumstance which is mentioned as sustaining the declaration that "Dr. Green was sent for," and acted under the direction of Dr. Bond, and consequently, that he asserted a falsehood in stating that he came to town "unsolicited" and was under the "influence of no man," is, that "*a note was picked up among the papers swept from the conference room, addressed to Dr. Bond, bearing date the same day that Dr. Green wrote his first letter. It was to inform him that Dr. Green had arrived, and to request him to come up to dinner, or soon afterwards.*" It seems, then, that because Dr. Green, a physician and a Methodist preacher, arrived at Mr. Charles A. Warfield's, and Mr. W. invited his own physician, who was also a Methodist preacher, to dine with his guest, or to call on him in the afternoon, there must have been some previous understanding



and appointment between these three persons—and, under existing circumstances, the appointment must have related to the “conspiracy” against the reformers! This is the reasoning upon which the whole of the heavy charges rest. The following letter from Mr. Warfield to Dr. Bond will serve to elucidate an affair which could only have been misinterpreted by prejudice and party spirit:—

“TO THE REV. DR. BOND.

“DEAR SIR,—I perceive that Dr. Jennings, in a communication published in the *Mutual Rights* of March 5th, 1830, has alluded to a note written to you, informing you of Dr. Green’s arrival in Baltimore, and inviting you to call on him as soon as convenient. This note, which he says was swept out of the conference room, he adduces as a proof that Dr. Green had been ‘sent for,’ and made use of in effecting the objects of those who wished to expel him and his associates from the Church.

“The note to which the doctor alludes I suppose to have been written by myself, and I deem it proper that I should correct the mistaken inferences which Dr. Jennings has drawn from it.

“Dr. Green had placed in my hands a manuscript which he intended to publish, and had requested me to submit it to your inspection. This manuscript had no relation to the controversy existing in the Methodist Episcopal Church. I had received no intimation of the doctor’s intention to visit Baltimore until the very day of his arrival; and when he came to my house, I immediately invited you to call and see him, because, having requested me to submit his manuscript to your perusal, I supposed it would gratify him to see and converse with you.

“I never had any reason to suspect that any person had solicited Dr. Green to come to Baltimore as a negotiator, or mediator, nor for any other purpose connected with the trials then pending before the Church; and if I had entertained such a suspicion, the positive declaration he made to the contrary would have entirely removed it.

“I am confident that Dr. Jennings has given place to erroneous suspicions with respect to Dr. Green. He came to Baltimore as a peacemaker, without having been solicited or advised to the measure by any person whatever. His efforts as a mediator were dictated by the purest benevolence; and whatever may be thought of the terms of reconciliation he proposed, the motive by which he was influenced entitles him to the love and esteem of all good men.

Yours, with much respect,

“CHARLES A. WARFIELD, of A.”

That “the head and front” of Dr. Bond’s “offending” in this matter may be known, we will add that he was prevented by professional duties from availing himself of the invitation to dinner, but he called in the

evening and stayed till a late hour, during which time the manuscript alluded to in Mr. Warfield's letter was read, and he learned that Dr. Green had that day made a communication to Dr. Jennings, proposing himself as a mediator in the affair then pending before the Church. Dr. Bond expressed his approbation of the design, and his earnest desire that it might eventuate in the restoration of peace and harmony. He also expressed a wish to know the terms of compromise intended to be offered; but Dr. Green declined stating the proposals he designed to make, until after he should receive Dr. Jennings's reply, when, if there appeared to be any hope of effecting the object he had in view, he would be willing to hold conversation with any of the brethren on either side of the question, who should do him the favour to call upon him for that purpose. Dr. Green dined with Dr. Bond the following day; and if he did not afterward do the like honour to Dr. Jennings or any of his friends, it was because they did not invite him. In answer to a hint given by Dr. Jennings in a postscript to his first letter, Dr. Green says, "In reply to your postscript, I have only to say, that I have not a single acquaintance among the reformers of this city, and therefore hope it will not be expected of me to visit those whom I know not, and who have no knowledge of me. When the way shall be opened for a friendly intercourse with them, I shall be free to embrace the opportunity." Yet, after having declined or neglected to "open the way for friendly intercourse," Dr. Jennings, in the letter which he *intended to have sent*, tells Dr. Green that "by mingling with our persecutors, either imperceptibly or by design, you forgot the object of your visit and undertook the office of a minister for the tyrannical party, in order to aid them in establishing their authority over us." Can there be anything more preposterous and absurd? After this explanation, we put it to the good sense of the reader, whether there was anything in the note which was swept out of the conference room, to justify the declaration that "Dr. Green was sent for;" or anything in the circumstance of Dr. Bond's calling upon Dr. Green by Mr. Warfield's invitation, which warrants the assumption that Dr. Green acted under the "influence and advice, if not the dictation, of Dr. Bond." Yet Dr. Jennings says there is "no doubt of it;" and Dr. Jennings is "an honourable man."

It cannot be fairly expected of the accused that he should prove the negative—that is, that he is not guilty of the charge alleged against him. The accuser is bound to prove the truth of the charge; and as no proof has been offered, we might fairly claim a verdict for Dr. Green without further controversy. But if our readers will for once excuse a work of supererogation, we will point to a fact in the history of Dr. Green's negotiation, which proves conclusively that he did not take his measures under the influence or dictation of Dr. Bond. It will be recollected that among the propositions made by Dr. Green to the quarterly-meeting conference,

there was one to appoint a committee to confer with a similar committee to be appointed by the Union Society, and that the pending negotiation should be transferred to said committees. This proposition was opposed in the conference by Dr. Bond, and was rejected for the reasons he assigned. (See Narrative and Defence, page 84.) Now is it possible that Dr. Bond would have advised Dr. Green to make a proposition to the conference which he himself intended to oppose? The notion is too absurd to be entertained by any rational man.

Dr. Green will pardon us for entering so minutely into his defence. We are aware that where he is known our vindication will be wholly unnecessary: but the calumny which we have refuted has been circulated where he is *not* known; and though the opinion of strangers may be of little consequence to him personally, yet the reputation of a minister must be of consequence to every part of the Church, and ought not to be slandered with impunity.

But what is it that has given Dr. Jennings a right to assail the fair reputation of such a man as Dr. Green, with such positiveness of assertion, without feeling himself under any obligation to furnish anything but vain and puerile surmises, in proof of his wanton and cruel allegations? Is it by virtue of his election to the head of a new sect, that he claims an exemption from the common obligations of social life? Is it the privilege of a reformer to impute to men of the most unblemished reputation, the foul crimes of hypocrisy, fraudulent pretences, double dealing, and lying? How else did he dare to assert that Dr. Green was not honest in his professions as a mediator, but under the mask of disinterested benevolence came as the tool and instrument of others, to spread a "snare" for the reformers; and that notwithstanding his declaration that he came without "solicitation," he was not only invited but "sent for," and submitted to the influence or dictation provided for him beforehand?

The fact is, Dr. Jennings was wholly incapable of appreciating the motives or character of Dr. Green. He was a partisan, and could not bring himself to believe that there were men who could rise superior to the party feeling of the moment, and look at the circumstances before them without prejudice or partiality. Nothing puts one of your manceuverers so much at fault as the open, undisguised manner of Dr. Green. There was a candour, a directness, and a dignified bearing in his manner of negotiating, utterly inconsistent with Dr. Jennings's notions of diplomacy. He had nothing to conceal or disguise, and therefore his propositions were plain, palpable propositions, which could neither be misunderstood nor evaded. They were at the same time so reasonable, so essentially necessary to the restoration of peace, that it was found by the leaders of the Union Society, as dangerous to reject them unequivocally, as it would have been ruinous to the ulterior designs of the party to accept them; and

it was therefore necessary to find a pretext for breaking off the negotiation. The pretext was found in the refusal of the quarterly conference to appoint a committee to negotiate with the committee of the Union Society, and Dr. Green was dismissed by the reformers. Dr. Jennings could not think it possible that Dr. Green was sincere in the friendly disposition towards reformers which he professed. A party man himself, he could not conceive how a Methodist could see through any other medium than party spirit. The doctor reminds us of a man of whom we have somewhere read, who, having divided the world into only two classes—*knaves and fools*—when he met with an *honest man*, did not know what to make of him or where to put him. Though everything in the deportment of Dr. Green corroborated his declarations, that he came as a volunteer, without solicitation, and with the benevolent desire to mediate a reconciliation which might be mutually advantageous to the Church and the reformers, such benevolence was incredible; and Dr. Green was accordingly ranked among “the bishops, the presiding elder, the preacher in charge of the station, and the whole body of official men, who had entered into a conspiracy to procure the condemnation of reformers.” We have now shown that the assertions in reference to Dr. Green, are quite as destitute of support as any which Dr. Jennings has made in regard to the other *dramatis personæ*, so incontinently introduced in his “drama,” as he so appropriately denominates this imaginary conspiracy.

If the reader has followed us through our former remarks, he will have seen that the whole of Dr. Jennings's fanciful “conspiracy” has passed away as “the baseless fabric of a vision.” Not a single fact is found to sustain his heavy charges, either against “the bishops, the presiding elder, the preacher in charge of Baltimore city station, or the whole body of official members.” Nor is there a vestige of truth in the ungenerous and unchristian accusations against Dr. Green or Dr. Bond.

The accusation against the bishops was founded exclusively upon the remarks made by a coloured preacher in the Baltimore District Conference. But the coloured preacher did not make the remarks attributed to him; and of this, we are informed, Dr. Jennings is himself *now* satisfied. He has ascertained that the conversation to which the coloured preacher alluded, was not held with Bishop George, but with Bishop Soule, and took place more than a year before the session of the district conference. Consequently, the advice of the bishop could not have been given in reference to the trial of Dr. Jennings and his confederates, which at that time could not have been foreseen without the spirit of prophecy, which certainly Dr. Jennings would not attribute to one of *our* bishops. The inquiry lately instituted by the doctor ought to have been made before he ventured to bring his railing accusation against such a man as Bishop George, as the same means of investigation were always at hand. It

shows, however, some degree of condescension in so confident an assailant to examine his ground at all; and we assure him, that if he will persevere in the inquiry, he will find his suspicions with respect to all the other persons implicated in his supposed conspiracy, equally as groundless as he now finds the culpable and dishonest agency he had assigned to the bishops.

We must now direct our attention to some strictures upon the proceedings of the Church, which we find scattered through the review without any regard to method or arrangement. The doctor thinks the brethren in Baltimore were incompetent to try him, because they were avowedly opposed to reform. "The judge, the prosecutors, and the committee," says he, "were all of *one party*, and had all prejudged our case. If a majority of reformers had been permitted to sit in judgment, they would certainly have decided in our favour. The whole court were anti-reformers, and they decided against us."

It will be recollected that in the charges exhibited against Dr. Jennings and his associates, they are not complained of on account of their being reformers; nor is it alleged that they have uttered and published opinions in favour of reform. They are charged with sowing dissensions in the Church by inveighing (that is, vehemently railing) against the Discipline; and with evil-speaking, that is, with slandering and calumniating their brethren, both the living and the dead. If, then, the doctor's reasoning be just—if a reformer could not be brought to trial before those who were opposed to all reform—he could not be brought to trial at all; for he admits, that if reformers were to try him, he would "*certainly*" be acquitted. It follows, then, that a member of a religious community has nothing to do but to start some novel opinions, procure a few adherents, and organize a party in the Church, and he is at once placed beyond the reach of discipline. His partisans, we are told, would certainly acquit him, and those opposed to his views are incompetent, because they will, necessarily, have formed opinions adverse to the views and principles of the accused. He may, therefore, in the furtherance of his schemes, traduce and vilify his brethren with impunity. Whatever *he deems* necessary to promote the views of his party he may do, according to the doctor's sophistry; for those opposed to him have prejudged his case, and are therefore incompetent to try him.

To what consequences would such doctrines lead? Suppose that, instead of endeavouring to reform our government and discipline, the doctor had undertaken to reform our doctrines; and, having adopted Unitarian opinions, had so successfully propagated them as to have made a considerable "party" in the Church. Suppose, moreover, that in his zeal to remodel our doctrines after his own fashion, he had used the same means as were employed to overthrow the government of the Church,

according to his logic he could not have been brought to trial, because none would have been competent to try him. His own party would, according to his own showing, decide in his favour; and all the rest of the members of the Church, not being Unitarians, would have prejudged his case, and would therefore be incompetent jurors. A man who had committed treason might as well challenge all his jurors because they had never wavered in their attachment to the government of their country. But the truth is, that the charges against Dr. Jennings had nothing to do with his being a reformer. The same slanderous publications would have subjected him to expulsion had he been ever so firm a friend to the government of the Church. The committee who suspended, and the quarterly conference who condemned him, had nothing to do with his views of Church government. The opinions he held upon that subject have been freely expressed in a memorial to the General Conference; and so far from subjecting the memorialists to any prosecution, they had been respectfully considered and answered. The only questions which arose upon his case were:—*First*, Were the papers adduced by those who accused him published by him? *Secondly*, Are the statements contained in them true or false? and *thirdly*, If not true, are they slanderous, and published with the evil designs of sowing dissensions in the Church and injuring the reputation of her ministry? Men of as high moral standing as any in our community have decided these questions against him, and whoever impartially reads their “Narrative and Defence” will sustain the decision.

To show that the statements we have given above correspond with those of the brethren who preferred the charges against Dr. Jennings, we shall quote what they have said on the subject in the Narrative and Defence:—

“Great pains,” say they, “have been taken to impress the public mind with the belief that the accused have been persecuted for a mere difference of *opinion* with their brethren on the subject of Church government, and that we wish and design to restrict the liberty of speech and the freedom of the press. This, however, is very far from being the fact. We regret, indeed, that any disagreement should exist in the Church, on any subject calculated to awaken undue excitement, or to give rise to strife and contention amongst brethren who have heretofore harmonized both in sentiment and effort; but we have never wished to prevent our brethren, who differed from us in opinion, from fully and fairly discussing the subject of Church government in general, or of ours in particular. We are not aware that any injury would arise from such a controversy, if it were conducted with proper temper—with a strict regard to truth, and to the feelings and characters of all concerned. In these declarations we believe we speak the sentiments of our brethren generally. We have a common

interest in the prosperity of the Church, and cannot be injured by any changes in our ecclesiastical economy which will promote the original design of our institutions—‘the universal spread of Scripture holiness!’ We enjoy no secular advantages from the present order of things. The benefits we derive from our connexion with the Methodists are purely spiritual, and whatever would tend to increase these could not fail to be as much a subject of rejoicing to us as to any of our brethren. We are prepared to follow the leadings of Providence, as the Methodists have heretofore done, and to adapt our economy to the circumstances of time and place, in such a way as may be deemed best calculated to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men. We have no desire, therefore, to suppress inquiry or prevent discussion; and we have no reason to believe that our brethren, either of the ministry or membership, have any wish to do so. Our complaint against the members of the ‘Union Society’ is not on account of their opinions on the subject of Church government, nor for the honest and candid expression of their opinions; but for the misrepresentation of the motives and conduct of our ministers, and for endeavouring to sow dissensions in the Church by inveighing against the discipline. Nor do we understand by ‘inveighing’ the temperate expression of opinion, or calm and dispassionate argument in favour of changing any part of our discipline—but we understand it to mean ‘vehement railing,’ ‘abusive censure or reproach.’ Our opponents will allow us this definition, because it is stated and contended for in the ‘Mutual Rights,’ by Mr. Shinn. That the finding fault *with*, and proposing alterations *of*, our discipline, are not considered violations of our discipline, is sufficiently manifested by the fact, that numerous petitions were sent up to the last General Conference, which did all this, yet they were nevertheless respectfully considered, and a general answer returned in a circular from the Conference.

“We repeat, then, that it is not for being reformers themselves, or for endeavouring to make reformers of others, nor for uttering and publishing their opinions on the subject of reform, that we complain of the members of the Baltimore ‘Union Society;’ but we complain that they have employed against their brethren in the ministry, and against the discipline of the Church, the severest invectives and the most vehement railing. They have impugned the motives of our venerable bishops, and our itinerant ministers, with unrelenting severity—and accused them, without the shadow of proof, with conduct which would render men odious even in civil society, and how much more in the Church of God! They represent them to the world as usurpers; as tyrants and despots, ‘lording it over God’s heritage;’ as exercising an arbitrary authority, which was at first ‘*surreptitiously*’ obtained, and which has been perpetuated by printing and publishing a falsehood in the preface to our Book of Discipline; and

by forbidding the people to inquire into the truth of the affair. Nay, more: they are represented as holding opinions, and exercising a 'domination,' highly dangerous to the civil liberties of the country; as being 'wolves among the lambs of the flock,' and wolves, too, who openly 'show their teeth and claws;' and to cap the climax, nearly one hundred of these ministers, constituting the Baltimore Annual Conference, the faithful pastors over at least thirty thousand souls, are stigmatized as 'abandoned tyrants,' as performing a 'laboured deed of hard-earned infamy.' From the extracts which we shall give from the 'Mutual Rights,' it will be shown that all this has been said of our itinerant ministers: and for these unjust accusations, for these vehement railings, we hold the Union Society accountable, because they have been uttered and published by an editorial committee elected by the society, and who profess to act as its agents, and under its supervision and control. If there be individuals in the Union Society who disapprove of the measures which have been pursued, but who had not sufficient influence to prevent or control them, let them disavow their participation in these measures, by leaving the society, and they will exonerate themselves from the blame. But while they do not disavow these measures—while they so far countenance them as to let these highly-reprehensible publications go out to the world under the sanction of their name and influence—they cannot complain if they are considered as accessary to the evil which has been done, and may yet be done, by the periodical of which we complain."

In the conclusion of their "Narrative and Defence," their standard work, as Dr. Jennings calls it, these brethren say:—

"Our brethren who may have hastily made up their opinion against the proceedings of the Church in Baltimore, from the protests and other publications of the accused members, will now have an opportunity to review the whole affair; and cannot fail to perceive the fallacy of the allegation so often reiterated against us, that we persecuted these members of our Church, in order to prevent investigation and suppress inquiry on the subject of reform. Dr. Jennings, in 'an address, intended, when written, to have been delivered before the district conference,' not only repeats this stale and groundless allegation, but attempts to show that the publishers of the 'Mutual Rights' are justified in speaking evil of ministers by the example of Mr. Wesley. He quotes, from Moore's Life of Wesley, instances in which, he says, Mr. Wesley 'exposed the conduct of the ministers of the Church of England, in a language as strong and pointed as any of the writers in the Mutual Rights have ever used, in respect to any minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church.' But in order that the example of Mr. Wesley, in this particular, should avail the doctor and his associates, it will be necessary for them to show, that Mr. Wesley's allegations against the ministers of the Church of England, were as



unfounded as those made in the Mutual Rights against our ministry manifestly are. For, with due deference to the doctor's superior learning, to speak that which is *true* is not '*evil-speaking*,' however severe it may be. Evil-speaking, according to the definitions of the word in Johnson and Walker, means 'slander,' 'defamation,' 'calumny.' The doctor's defence, then, ought to have been a very different thing from what we find it. Instead of declaiming on reform, and the iniquity of endeavouring to prevent it, he should have set himself to prove the truth of the allegations made by him and his associates, against our bishops and other ministers. If he had shown them to be true, the charge of '*evil-speaking*' would not have been sustained,—although injuring the reputation of another, by publishing his faults or failings, can only be justified by some apparent necessity for the disclosure. 'And shall we,' says the doctor, 'accuse the author of the general rules [Mr. Wesley] of speaking evil of ministers, because he there published the *truth* concerning those ministers who opposed themselves to hinder his work? I will not.' No, indeed, nor we either; for the Apostle Paul, who expressly enjoins it upon us, 'to speak evil of no man,' and the Apostle Peter, who exhorts us to 'lay aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all *evil-speakings*,' equally condemned the conduct of men of all ranks and conditions in life, in terms of very severe rebuke. If the doctor then can prove what has been alleged, both against the living and the dead, in the Mutual Rights, he will not only stand acquitted of '*evil-speaking*,' but prove conclusively the necessity of a thorough reform, not only of our government, but of our morals. We confidently believe, however, that no attempt will ever be made to *substantiate* charges of such a heinous nature against the ministers of our Church."

The review contains some severe animadversions upon the conduct of the Baltimore Annual Conference, because they declined to interfere with the decisions of the judicatories below. The conference decided that the appellants, not having appeared before the quarterly-meeting conference, but contumaciously disregarded its citations, were not entitled to an appeal. And was not this decision of the annual conference in strict conformity with the Discipline and with all law and usage? Could the conference entertain the appeal of those who had set at defiance the Discipline of the Church and refused to appear before the tribunals appointed to try them? Had they a right to step over all the primary tribunals, and because they had set up for reformers go up with their cases at once to the court of appeals? Surely not. But then they say they had protested against the competency of the inferior tribunals to try their cases, and therefore might properly resist their authority. But was it ever known that a person objecting to the competency of a court in his case, claimed a right to *decide* the question of competency? We apprehend that the decision of the ques-

tion of competency rests with the court itself; and if the court maintains its competency the objector will be held to trial, notwithstanding his objections. If it be a case in which an appeal is allowed, as in all civil actions, the alleged incompetency of the court below may be a ground of appeal, but certainly will not authorize the objector to refuse to obey the citations or mandates of the primary court in the incipient state of the proceedings.

But, in fact, the protest entered by Dr. Jennings and those concerned with him, not only denied the right of the quarterly-meeting conference to try them, but also the competency of the annual conference. They sent up their memorial to this conference, however, and now the doctor complains terribly that this body declined to do him justice, notwithstanding he had previously alleged that none but the General Conference was competent to decide upon matters of so much importance as were involved in his case. Into what strange absurdities and inconsistencies are men hurried by party spirit!

Dr. Jennings, in his review, takes pains to collect and reiterate most of the stale and oft-refuted charges of unfairness in the course of his trial. The preacher in charge of the station is again charged with preparing the way for the unanimous condemnation of the accused by the quarterly-meeting conference. Never was there a charge more unjust or unfounded. Mr. Hanson's conduct in the whole proceedings has passed through the most fiery ordeal of his adversaries, and was subjected to the strictest scrutiny by the General Conference. His justification has been made manifest to every impartial inquirer to whom the means of investigation have been afforded. His defence, published in the Appendix to the Narrative and Defence, [original edition,] will sufficiently justify this opinion.

In the account Dr. Jennings has given of the proceedings in Baltimore, he complains that the editors of the Mutual Rights and the members of the Baltimore Union Society generally, were held accountable for publications in that periodical which were written by other persons under fictitious signatures; and he inquires why the names of these writers were not demanded, and proceedings had against them as the authors, instead of instituting prosecutions against the publishers of the offensive papers?

We answer. In the first place, that the Church had no right to demand the names of the authors, and the editorial committee would not have been bound to make the exposure.

Secondly. The writers were believed to reside out of the jurisdiction of the Church in Baltimore, and we had no right to dictate to the Churches elsewhere the course which it might be proper to take in the premises. The sister Churches had the exclusive right to bring under dealings any of their offending members—we neither claimed nor desired any jurisdiction over them.

Thirdly. We held the publishers and writers to be equally culpable, and therefore equally obnoxious to expulsion from the Church. The complainant seems to suppose that an editor may publish what he pleases, provided he gives up the name of the author when demanded. But this is not law in either Church or State. An indictment at common law will lie against the printers and venders of a libel as well as against the writer, and the punishment of one by no means exonerates the others. A contrary supposition involves the grossest absurdity, as the ends of justice would always be defeated by the printers and publishers of libels, who would take care to find an author out of the jurisdiction of the court, and, therefore, beyond the reach of punishment. But if neither the common law nor any statute law exonerates the printers and publishers of libels from punishment upon giving up the writer's name, much less can they escape condemnation upon Scriptural grounds. If the publications in the *Mutual Rights* were "unjustifiably inflammatory," and "misrepresented both individuals and facts," as some of the writers themselves have confessed, we ask, was Dr. Jennings more excusable for publishing than the authors were for writing them? Can a Christian, and a Christian minister, publish to the world the most serious accusations against his brethren, nay, against any human being, without *knowing* them to be true, and be guiltless in the sight of either God or man? Will it avail him anything to say, I did not write the accusations—I only published them—when he thereby gave the slanders an extension and a currency which they could not otherwise have had? Is there any man of common sense and common honesty who will say that the publisher is not as guilty as the author? We think not; and, therefore, the Church was justifiable in holding Dr. J. amenable to discipline for such publications, whether he gave up the real names of his correspondents or withheld them. His agency in the publications being undeniable, the only ground of defence should have been to prove their truth; but this was not attempted by either writers or publishers, and as no atonement was proffered, nothing was left to the Church but the painful operation of excision.

Under this view of the subject, what would it have availed the doctor if Mr. Hanson had postponed his trial until he had written to and consulted all his correspondents? Their permission to give up their real names would not have lessened his offence by a single iota. He was not charged with *writing* any paper in the *Mutual Rights* under a fictitious signature, but with *publishing* them; and if the writers had been exposed and expelled, the doctor would not thereby have escaped the punishment to which his own acts had justly exposed him. There is, therefore, no justice in his complaint against Mr. Hanson, for not postponing the trial in order to indulge him in long and useless correspondence with the writers of the offensive publications.

The doctor's remarks upon the Conference Report on petitions and memorials, and upon the propositions of compromise which were voted by that body, are so blended together that the reader must have all the documents before him, or have a very distinct recollection of them, to correctly understand the reviewer. We do not propose to follow him in his discussion of these matters. They have all been canvassed before, and the reader, by consulting the Itinerant, may be enabled to make up his opinion without further assistance from us. But the doctor has not spared the General Conference. He would seem to wish that body to assume an authority which in no wise appertains to them; namely, to annul the acts of the quarterly conferences and the annual conferences, in cases in which these judicatories are vested, by the Discipline, with appellate and final jurisdiction. Private members have an appeal to the quarterly-meeting conferences; and local preachers to the annual conferences; and, under the Discipline, these appeals can go no farther. But when such a man as Dr. J. is concerned, he would have the General Conference to interfere and assume a power unknown to the constitution, annulling the acts of all the competent judicatories of the Church; and that, too, in favour of those who had refused to appear in answer to the citations from the authorities who, by this very General Conference, had been vested with jurisdiction in the premises. We hope we shall be excused for declining to enter into any argument in order to show the absurdity of such pretensions or claims.

The reader will remember that we have shown the doctor grossly mistaken in all the grounds upon which he rests his charge of "conspiracy" against the "bishops, the writer of the Narrative and Defence, the presiding elder, the preacher in charge, and the whole body of official men" in the Baltimore city station. But if we were permitted to indulge in mere suspicions, might we not adduce better reasons for suspecting that the doctor, and some of his associates, had entered into a "conspiracy" quite as culpable as that which he has charged upon others? We will not assert it; but were we of the reform school, we should have suspected, long ago, that the doctor had entertained views, and planned schemes, which did not accord with those which were generally professed by reformers. We should have been led by the measures adopted by the doctor and those more immediately in his confidence, to suspect that he entertained an inveterate hostility to the whole itinerant system, and designed its utter overthrow; or if this could not be accomplished, the establishment of a new sect under his own control.

We have been credibly informed that Dr. Jennings has said he was aware of the radical defects in our system, before he entered the Church; and that he mentioned his objections to some presiding elder, who put this very significant question to him: "If you wished to drive the hogs

out of the garden, how would you proceed? would you stay outside of the fence, or come into the garden?" The application was obvious, and the doctor came into the garden to turn the hogs out. He delayed the execution of his work, however, for some years, and in the meantime taught us to think the garden was in a very flourishing condition. We all remember how he used to eulogize the economy of Methodism from the pulpit and in private conversation, telling us, in no measured terms of commendation, that nothing like it had blessed the Church since the apostolic age. Yet all this time he knew the hogs were in the garden, and he had intended from the first to turn them out. These hogs were, we suppose, the travelling preachers; but a fit opportunity had not offered to turn them out, though the doctor had entered within the enclosure.

The favourable moment arrived, however, and the doctor was not slow in embracing the opportunity. The subject of a lay delegation in the General Conference had begun to be canvassed, and might have been canvassed with good temper for an indefinite period, by all who had nothing in view but the common good and prosperity of the Church. The question, after having been fully discussed, would have been disposed of according to the light which had been elicited by the discussion, and all would have acquiesced in the decision. But, then, none would have desired to impair the itinerant system, and the doctor and his particular friends would have gained nothing by the controversy. The hogs would have remained in the garden, and no new sect would have arisen to elevate the doctor to distinction as their leader.

It was now that a new plan of action was devised, and forthwith carried into execution. The episcopacy was to be assailed, as the right arm of the itinerancy; and it *was* assailed with a violence and audacity of assertion which has been seldom equalled and never surpassed. Meantime, the "Mutual Rights," under the direction of the doctor and a few choice spirits, assumed a tone of violence, and indulged in a latitude of abuse, which entirely changed the state of the controversy. Now, we ask, why was all this, if there existed no conspiracy to carry matters beyond a lay delegation? Why was the success of the primary measure compromised by the attack upon the episcopacy, and the slander of the living and the dead, but to urge reformers beyond the moderate measures which they originally contemplated; or to produce such excitement as to effect expulsions and secessions in order to establish another and independent sect? It will not be forgotten that the violence of the leaders in Baltimore so disgusted many of the reformers elsewhere that they withdrew from the ranks; and one of them, of no ordinary distinction, said, "I am a reformer—but those men are revolutionists."

It is true, that all this while we were told that the Union Society was formed and sustained to prevent secessions from the Church; and we be-

lieve that most of the members themselves believed the declaration : but we are equally satisfied that the leaders had other views ; and that it had been long determined either to equalize pastoral authority between the travelling and local preachers, or to divide the Church. In conformity with this determination, we know that a letter was written from Baltimore, long before any prosecutions were commenced, to a travelling preacher who was supposed to favour reform, but whose views of reform were always confined within very reasonable limits, informing him, that the Union Society was ripe for secession " whenever *they* said the word," and they were anxious to ascertain what assistance they might expect from the travelling preachers. In short, were we of the reform party, we should deem ourselves justified in attributing the total failure of the scheme of lay delegation, more to the " conspiracy " gotten up in Baltimore, among certain leaders of the party, than to any other circumstance whatever,—a conspiracy which was not less inimical to the interests and views of the party generally, than to the welfare of the Methodist Episcopal Church. And it was no point of honour or consistency to accompany them, when they were expelled for conduct which was not justified by necessity, nor sanctioned by the general opinion of reformers.

The doctor proceeds in his review to justify the defamatory publications in the *Mutual Rights*, which were made the ground of the charges on which he was expelled from the Church. Large extracts from these publications were made in the " *Narrative and Defence*." The extracts were given fairly and at large ; and they were commented upon freely. The doctor, in his attempted justification, so garbles and disjoins them, that no person would recognise them as the papers alluded to in the " *Narrative and Defence*," if he were not advertised by the writer of their identity. We shall not follow the reviewer through his herculean undertaking. Long before he cleanses the Augean stable all interest in the controversy will have subsided, and reform will have passed to the tomb of the Capulets. And, besides, we may fairly turn the doctor over to his friends who represented him and his associates at the General Conference, and who, by their authority, acknowledged the publications which the doctor now attempts to justify, as unjustifiably inflammatory, misrepresenting both individuals and facts. It was distinctly stated at the Conference that these representatives were authorized to make these acknowledgments, and they were made by Messrs. Snethen, Shinn, and Bascom, three of the principal writers whose papers were complained of, and from whose writings the extracts were made which were published in the " *Narrative and Defence*." After these acknowledgments we, with due deference, suppose that Dr. Jennings's defence is wholly gratuitous, and any further effort on our part, to show their true character and tendency, would be a work of supererogation.

THE CONVENTION.

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MR. EDITOR,—We are not of those who look with indifference to the approaching convention of those who have assumed the name of reformers ; on the contrary, in whatever point of view it be contemplated, it is a measure which will awaken the deepest solicitude. Although there may be some who will come to the convention heated by the collision which has preceded the meeting and reckless of the consequences which may grow out of it, and some who hope to consummate designs which, though concealed, were in view from the commencement of the unhappy controversy which has so long disturbed the peace of the Methodist community, yet we cannot doubt but there will also be some who are averse to carrying measures to extremities, who hesitate to leave the Church in which they have been nurtured and in which they may have enjoyed the felicity of having been extensively useful to others. Whatever angry feelings may have been produced by the opposition their fond schemes have encountered, they will, now that the crisis is approaching, feel some reluctance to cut asunder the ties of brotherhood by which they have been so long united to the Methodists, and to dis sever forever those endearing connexions which have been cemented by a thousand prayers, and hallowed by the recollections of mutual conflicts and mutual triumphs in our Christian warfare. These will pause, fearfully pause, before they give their voices in favour of a separation from the Church—before they agree to rush themselves, or to hurry others, into the uncertainties of an untried experiment, in which, peradventure, hope may be disappointed, and that which now appears to be a plausible theory may vanish into air, leaving not a wreck behind. They will surely investigate closely the reasons which may be assigned for a measure pregnant with such momentous consequences. Leaving to others the difficult task of estimating the advantages which the contemplated new Church promises, permit us to ask, What are the grievances and hardships which impel them to the measure of separation? We will not conceal that we are of those who contend that the claim to a lay and local representation in the General Conference cannot be sustained upon the ground of right : but, even upon the supposition that such a claim were just and indefeasible, it will not be contended that the claim is of such a nature as not to be surrendered if the common good requires it. It will not be said, or at least it has not been asserted, that we are bound to insist upon the exercise of this right if its exercise would lessen the benefits we now derive from our association as Methodists, and diminish our means of being useful to the world.

If, then, it is agreed that we may forego the exercise of this right, the only question to be decided is, whether it would contribute to the common good to introduce such a change in our economy; and this question could only be settled by the voice of the Church. Now, will it be said that the voice of the Church is in favour of the change? On the contrary, may it not be safely asserted that nine-tenths of the Church, ministry and membership, are opposed to the innovation? Surely, then, the refusal of the General Conference to make so important an alteration in our ecclesiastical polity, not only without the consent, but directly in opposition to the wishes of the great body of the membership, cannot be a justifiable ground of secession from the Church; and those who advocate such a measure upon no better ground, must not expect to be allowed the name of republicans, notwithstanding they have so confidently denied their brethren any participation in the glory of the appellation.

But it has been asserted that our Church denies to its members the liberty of speech and of the press, and thereby precludes the discussion by which only useful and necessary changes may be brought about. If the frequent reiteration of this allegation had induced any to believe it true, they must have been undeceived by the resolutions of the last General Conference, in which the right to interdict such publications is expressly disavowed, and in which the proposition that periodical papers, devoted to the existing controversy, should be discontinued, is accompanied by a provision that any person should be at liberty to publish whatever he pleased upon his own individual responsibility—a license as broad as we enjoy under the civil government of our country. We hope it is not necessary to say that every Christian Church, as well as every well-organized civil government, makes a just and necessary distinction between the liberty of the press and its licentiousness.

But we are informed that there are those amongst the reformers who feel themselves *bound* to leave the communion of our Church, because some who have been engaged with them in the cause of reform have been expelled,—and it is a point of honour to suffer with them! Now, we admit that those who justify the slanderous and inflammatory publications for which these were expelled, and who advised them, when cited to answer before the Church judicatories, to make no atonement or satisfaction to their injured brethren,—we admit, we say, that *they* ought to sustain them, unless they have repented of the evil of their doings. But if they condemn those publications, they are surely not bound to relinquish their relation to the Church which has been blessed to their edification and comfort, because others thought proper to incur expulsion by improper speaking or writings.

But is it not obvious, that the leading men amongst those who have been expelled, designed from the beginning to bring about this state of



things, should they fail to mould the Church to their liking? It must not be expected that we should point to any avowal of this design, because such a disclosure would have frustrated their purposes, by opening the eyes of those who were blindly following in their train. The secession, "when accomplished, was to appear to be the result of uncontrollable necessity." A very cursory review of their measures, however, will show that their conduct is not to be explained upon any supposition but of a fixed intention either to carry their views in reference to our Church government into effect, or to procure an extensive secession if they failed.

It will be recollected, that after numerous auxiliary branches had been added to the Union Society of Baltimore, most of whom had, perhaps, no views beyond uniting in a memorial to the General Conference in favour of a lay and local representation, at this juncture of time, "The History and Mystery" was, after having been read and canvassed in the parent society, published to the world. Why was this publication, so foreign to the object which was to engage the undivided efforts of the Union Societies—a work, too, got up in a manner so highly calculated to excite bad feelings and awaken hostility—thrown upon us by the leader of reform in Baltimore, and sanctioned by his associates, nay, gloried in as an engine which was to overturn the whole superstructure of Methodism? To say nothing of the teeming publications in the Mutual Rights, of a similar character and tendency, which soon followed, it will be recollected that the M'Cainites could not conceal the gratification they felt at the crisis they had brought about, when the Church discipline was made to bear upon them. They anticipated the excitement which the cry of persecution, right or wrong, would occasion; and they calculated that party spirit would be aroused to a pitch which prudence and discretion could not restrain, and that many would follow them to a point from which retreat would be exceedingly difficult, if not impracticable. Accordingly, the local preachers refused to make their defence before the quarterly-meeting conference, nor did they take an appeal to the annual conference. The lay members, without exception, declined an appeal also. All attempts at conciliation were rejected with contempt and derision; and to block up every avenue to their return, they hastened, without consulting their associate branches, to purchase a church, and set up a separate sect. In the same spirit and temper they rejected the resolutions of the General Conference in their favour, although they were predicated upon propositions made by their own representatives, *and certainly within the range of their instructions.*

Upon the whole, it is easy to discern, that the M'Cainites had from the onset laid their schemes within view of a separation. They have only met what they designed to produce; and it remains to be seen how many.

will be taken in their toils, and hurried by their counsel to engage in a war of extermination against those with whom they have heretofore congregated in the house of prayer, and with whom they may yet associate in Christian fellowship, without any sacrifice of religious principle, or conscientious scruple whatever.

To those who are still members of the Church, and who propose to take a part in the convention, we would appeal in favour of the many whose final estate may be involved in the consequences of the determination they are about to make. Pardon our presumption, if you esteem it such, for the sake of our motives. We do not expect our remarks to pass for anything *more* than they are worth; on the contrary, we anticipate the probability of their failing to claim the regard to which they may have been justly entitled, on account of the medium through which they are presented. We have, however, no choice of mediums; and nothing is left us, but to discharge our duty the best way we may. Permit us, then, to ask, Can anything but matters of conscience justify a rending of the body of Christ? Is a mere speculative opinion, involving neither in its nature or consequences any article of faith or religious duty, a proper warrant for the terrible consequences which will inevitably grow out of the contemplated secession? Can you stand justified before God, to endeavour, for such *trivial* causes, to sow and to perpetuate party feuds and strife among brethren who have heretofore loved one another as members of one family, having one common interest; to divide circuits, break up classes, and carry discord "even to the family altar;" to cripple ministerial effort and missionary operations, by dividing their friends, and turning their attention from the common interests of Zion to party contests and personal altercations? Have you duly weighed the whole matter, aside from any party views or purposes? Are you aware, that among those who may be led to follow you, many will be influenced by their confidence in men, not measures? Some of these may happen to be weak in faith, and unfitted by constitution, by habit, or by religious experience, to live in a storm. They may not be able to preserve a Christian temper, a quiet spirit, amidst the agitated elements which your decision may put in motion. May not these be turned out of the way, and utterly lose their souls, while you are disputing and contending about straws? We admit, that if this thing is with you a matter of conscience, you are bound to obey its dictates according to the light you have. If you cannot live in our Church, and preserve a conscience void of offence towards God and man; if you cannot abide in your present relation to us, and still grow in grace, you have no option—you are bound to leave our communion. But is this the case? Do you not acknowledge the Methodist Church to be a living Church, where the gospel is faithfully preached, the ordinances duly administered, and the membership generally pious?

Indeed, it is not of evils already experienced, that complaint is generally made, but of those which are anticipated. Few complain of injuries already sustained under the operation of our present institutions, but of such as they apprehend may hereafter occur to others. They contend not for themselves, but for posterity. But would it be wise to put the weak in jeopardy, by inviting them to fierce contentions, and risk the deplorable consequences of a family feud, to avoid a possible contingency, but one which may never happen? We do not deny, however, that cases of individual hardship, and even of oppression, may have happened under the administration of our Church government; but it must likewise be admitted, that equal hardship and oppression have occurred in every Church, and will be possible under the most perfect system of ecclesiastical polity which the wisdom of man can contrive. Nay, instances of a similar kind happen every day in courts of civil and criminal jurisprudence, under a system of laws which the wisdom and experience of ages have vainly endeavoured to perfect.

Remember, in the decision you are about to make, you are not only fixing your own spiritual relations, but those also of many who are looking up to you for advice and example. Are you sure, that under an economy yet to form, you can be prepared to supply them so amply with the word of life, and the means of instruction and encouragement, as they are now supplied? Without this assurance, you cannot lead them away without compromising these eternal interests; and to seduce them from the enjoyment of religious advantages necessary to their spiritual welfare merely to increase a party, or to make a formidable array in the eyes of the world, would be as much worse than inflicting upon them any bodily injury, as the soul is more valuable than the body.

We confess we have no fears of the ultimate safety of our Church. Trouble and great conflicts we have had and shall yet have, and of a kind too which are most grievous and most difficult to sustain—"troubles amongst false brethren;" but the issue must be right. If we have a field of labour assigned us by the Lord of the vineyard, we have only to be diligent and faithful to our duty, and we shall be strengthened to overcome difficulties and to sustain afflictions until whosoever letteth be taken away. In short, if we are doing the work of the Lord, he will provide the ways and the means of accomplishing that which he hath required of us, if we are found faithful to our trust. It is not therefore for the stability of our Church that we apprehend anything from the secession; for if it be of God they cannot overturn it, and if not, the sooner it is overturned the better. But we anticipate with great anxiety the probable decision of the convention; because we believe the present welfare and perhaps the eternal happiness of thousands to be involved in the decision.

C.

A REVIEW OF THE "CONVENTIONAL ARTICLES FOR THE ASSOCIATED  
METHODIST CHURCHES,"

AGREED UPON IN A CONVENTION OF THE DELEGATES OF THE FRIENDS OF  
REPRESENTATION, HELD IN THE CITY OF BALTIMORE, NOVEMBER 12, 1828.

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"It is observed in the history of innovation, that the indirect and unforeseen consequences of every great change of an existing system are more numerous and extensive than those which had been seen and calculated upon, whether by those who advocated or those who opposed the alteration."—WALTER SCOTT.

THE right of any body of Christians to form a constitution and establish themselves as a separate and distinct sect we will not attempt to controvert, provided they keep within the limits prescribed in the great charter of our Christian privileges contained in the Holy Scriptures. And although separation from the fellowship of a Church which we have voluntarily joined is not a light matter, yet, whenever any number of Christians conscientiously believe that by such a secession they will be able to do more for the glory of God and the salvation of men than they can effect by retaining their membership in the Church to which they belong, they are bound to secede. In doing this, however, they ought to be careful to give no unnecessary offence to others; they are bound, in Christian charity, to allow as much honesty of purpose and uprightness of intention to the brethren from whom they separate, as they claim for themselves. If, conscious of their own superior endowments, they fear not to enter upon a course of experiments in Church government, they should feel tenderly for those who, thinking more humbly of themselves, prefer the safer path of experience. In short, they should be contented with the flattering prospects which are held out to them in a system contrived by their own superior wisdom, and with having offered the benefits of their talents to those whom they leave behind. They have no right to rail at others, much less to misrepresent both their conduct and character to the world.

Allowing, then, all that the seceders from our Church claim for themselves, as respects the right of separating from our communion, we should not have deemed it proper to animadvert upon the defects of their new system had they not prefaced it with a string of declarations and slanderous denunciations against us, as false and unfounded as they are uncharitable. In looking over the long list of "whereases," by which the articles alluded to are prefaced, we do not find a single fact alleged, or a single motive assigned, in reference to the Church they are about to leave, which is not either wholly unfounded or grossly misrepresented.

Neither the General Conference nor the annual conferences have ever claimed a divine right to legislate for the Church, as is asserted by this preamble. On the contrary, the General Conference, at its last session, formally and explicitly renounced the right of *legislating* for the Church, in the proper and strict sense of that term. They avow that the laws for the government of Christians have been made by the great Head of the Church himself. It, therefore, only remains for his ministry to preach his gospel, to explain and enforce both its doctrines and discipline, and to adopt such prudential rules and regulations as may best enable them to discharge these duties. Neither is it true that any have been expelled from our Church for their opinions upon Church government, or for communicating those opinions to others, either by writing or speaking. Those who have been expelled, and who are alluded to in the preamble, have been disowned by their brethren for assailing the characters of their brethren with all the rancour and bitterness of political partisans. And it is remarkable, too, that the rules of discipline under which they were charged are adopted into the new code, and are thereby sanctioned by the free and voluntary act of those who heretofore complained of them as so grievously oppressive.

Leaving for the present, however, the further consideration of this extraordinary preamble, we shall hasten to review the articles which it introduces, and inquire what are the benefits which the Church would have derived from the adoption of the innovations proposed by our disaffected brethren, or rather, what are the evils into which we should have plunged had we yielded to the clamour and turbulence with which their theories and projects were urged upon us. It is but fair to infer, that what has been done by the separatists for themselves, is the same which they desired we should have done for them; and that the constitution and form of government which they in their congregated wisdom have made, would have constituted the economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had it been modelled according to their wishes. Indeed, we are told so by the convention itself in their preamble; for we are informed, that "they will now of necessity meet the demand which has been so often made by their opponents, to exhibit a plan explanatory of the changes which they desire."

We must, therefore, in reviewing these conventional articles, or new Church constitution, consider its provisions in application to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and inquire how far we acted wisely in resisting the strenuous endeavours of our disaffected brethren to change the fundamental principles of our economy. And we rejoice that we have at length the opportunity, so long denied, of ascertaining precisely the extent of the revolution from which we have escaped.

The first article recognises, as part of the economy of the new association, all that belongs to our Church polity, "except where contravened by some other article." The separatists were thus saved from all the

necessity of settling their articles of religion, and their moral discipline, and even much that pertains to its administration. They are not now prepared, we apprehend, to estimate the obligations they owe to those who have saved them from the difficulties which would have grown out of the settlement of such matters. If, however, we estimate the difficulties of erecting an entire new building by the total failure to mend any part of an old one, after all the pains the projectors have taken, we may, perhaps, have some faint conception of the magnitude of the undertaking.

Before we proceed to a regular review of the articles, we beg leave to introduce one of them, which, as a sweeping provision covering all the rest, we cannot postpone; because it gives a peculiar cast of character to the whole business of reform, as contemplated by the seceders. It is the only article in which an attempt is made to innovate upon the moral discipline of our Church; and from the gross impropriety both in principle and tendency of this one, we are thankful that *it is* the only one. We allude to the fifteenth article—which reads in the latest edition as follows:—

“Nothing contained in these articles shall be so construed as to interfere with the right of property belonging to any member of this association, as recognised by the laws of the State within the limits of which the member may reside.”

By this article of the new constitution, the Church is precluded from exercising any control over its members in any matter relating to property, provided it be *legally* vested in them. No matter how *unjustly* one member may retain the property of another, if he be legally authorized to do so, the aggrieved member can have no redress before the Church judicatories; and the injustice, however manifest to all men, may be persisted in without incurring the forfeiture of Church membership or Christian privileges.

Cases innumerable may be supposed by our readers, in which this article would compel the Church to sanction fraud and injustice; and continue in her communion men who would be deemed dishonest, not only at the tribunal of Christian morality, but by the common honesty of the world. Civil laws can only provide for the general application of the rules of justice, even when they are intended to be most rigorously just. It is not possible to provide against all the advantages which the artifices of men may take of a law which, though good and wholesome in its general provisions, may be unjust and iniquitous in its application to individual cases. Thus it may be absolutely necessary that the laws of the State should bar, by a statute of limitation, the recovery of claims which the claimant has neglected to demand for a certain term of years. Not that a debt can be cancelled by the debtor's having avoided the pay-

ment of it for any term of years whatever; but the law presumes the payment, from the neglect of the creditor to prosecute the claim, and the State has an unquestionable right to say what shall be received, in courts of judicature, as evidence of the payment of a debt. It is easy to see what would be the consequences of abolishing the statute of limitation. Every man would be compelled to preserve his receipts with perpetual vigilance, and even to provide for their perpetuation through all successive generations, lest, in some future age, claims should be revived after the evidence of their liquidation was lost. But, notwithstanding the necessity and general equity of such laws, it is obvious that the most unjust advantages may be taken, under their provisions, of the simplicity, the negligence, or even the benevolence and lenity of creditors. He who avails himself of such means to avoid the payment of a just claim, of whatever standing, is not only dishonest, but an enemy of social order—perverting the very institutions which are intended to promote and secure the ends of justice, to the purposes of fraud. Under the article we have quoted, it will be seen that the judicatories of the new Church are prohibited from interfering with any rights of property belonging to their members, if such rights be recognised by the laws of the State in which they may reside. Their members are therefore at liberty to plead the statute of limitation, in bar of any claim, however just, without thereby incurring a forfeiture of membership, or even bringing upon themselves the censure of the Church!

Again: by this article a member may hold and possess any species of property, however inconsistent with good morals the participation in such property may be. He may not be allowed to attend theatrical exhibitions; but he may hold as many shares of theatre stock as he pleases. He may not play at billiards; but he may own a billiard-table, and let it out to others—provided he take out a license according to law. He may not be a privateersman; but he may hold “a right of property” in the vessel employed in privateering. In short, it would be endless to enumerate the instances in which a member of the new association might avail himself of this rule to retain his membership, while violating the most obvious precepts of Christian obligation.

We have been told, by a member of the convention, that the article we have been noticing was intended to apply exclusively to the rights of property in slaves. It will, nevertheless, be seen, by looking at the rule itself, that it does, in fact, apply to any species of property whatever; and being a constitutional article, it is a part of the paramount law of the community who have enacted it. No individual part of the Church can repeal, alter, or modify its provisions. It must continue in force, whatever be the mischief it may occasion, until repealed by some subsequent General Convention.

But if it be true that the article was intended to prohibit, by a constitutional provision, any interference on the part of the annual conferences with the right of the members to hold or to traffic in slaves, we confess we regret it more than any of the many errors into which the convention have fallen. For the credit of our common profession, we would rather that we were allowed to attribute the manifest impropriety of the article to an oversight in the makers of it, to hurry or inadvertency, or to anything, rather than a direct intention to acknowledge "a right of property in human souls." Posterity will scarcely believe it possible, that a Christian Church, organizing itself for the first time in the enlightened nineteenth century, commenced, by conceding to avarice and worldly prudence a primary precept of Christianity: "Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets;" that they compromised with the world, by surrendering to it a *right* to hold fellow-beings in involuntary slavery,—having an arbitrary control over them, which the Almighty himself does not exercise over the creatures he has made; for he *compels* no man to do either good or evil. We could wish, not only for the sake of our common profession, but for the sake of the violated rights of humanity, that our brethren had not done this thing; that they had not conceded it as a right to their members, not only to hold slaves, but to engage in the horrid traffic in human beings which disgraces our country.

We are aware of the delicacy of touching this subject at all. We know the advantage which we shall give our opponents in certain sections of the country, by the observations we have made: but we cannot—nay, we dare not—make any compromise upon this subject; for he who does so, betrays the cause of Christianity.

But although we deny that there is any Scripture rule to warrant, or other rule of moral justice to authorize the practice of slavery as it exists in this country, yet we are ready to concede that in our efforts to procure the emancipation of slaves, and in enforcing it by Church discipline, much circumspection and prudence ought to be used. We should be careful to keep in view that the great end of the gospel is to better the condition of man in this world, and prepare him for happiness in the next. Certain States of the Union have put it out of the power of their citizens to *free* their slaves. They may indeed discharge them from their service, and disclaim all right to hold them in servitude, but they do not thereby make them free, as the law allows, perhaps makes it obligatory on, others to enslave them. The condition of the slave would certainly not be bettered by exchanging the service of one who fears God, for that of one who does not feel the force of religious obligation. Under such circumstances, our Church, although she fearlessly avows her opposition to the principle, is nevertheless compelled to permit the practice of slavery by her members;



still, however, asserting the right and exercising the authority of meliorating the condition of the slaves who may be held by them. If enough has not been done upon this subject where the laws of the State allow more, it is to be regretted; and it must be admitted, that no subject requires more wisdom and caution in the exercise of ecclesiastical discipline, than the one to which we have referred. But the seceders from our Church have, by acknowledging *a right of property* in slaves, and forbidding any interference with such rights, given up the *principle* upon which any future efforts might be based to do away the evil. They have done more. They have authorized the traffic in slaves to any extent; and under this article of their constitution, the cruel and relentless slave-trader may not only put Christianity to the blush, but outrage the common feelings of the community, by presenting himself at their communion table. Nay, preachers and people may engage in the trade without let or hinderance, since no article of their constitution is to be so construed as to interfere with their rights of property in slaves. We do not wonder that the intention of this article was concealed. It would not have done to announce its true design, by specially confining it to "rights of property in slaves," because the feelings of many who have joined in the great work of reform, would have revolted at such direct justification of a practice they had always looked upon as immoral. The specification, however, ought to have been made, notwithstanding its odiousness, because in the endeavour to cover the intention of the article, the convention has, as we have shown above, opened the door to other evils, formidable both in number and magnitude.

When the printed edition of the articles first appeared, the words "of property belonging to" were not found in the fifteenth article. The rule, therefore, permitted the members of the association to *do* as well as to possess whatever the law of the State authorized. Upon pointing out the dangerous license which this article afforded to any member of the association who was inclined to avail himself of it, one of the members informed us that nothing more was intended by it, than to secure to the members the liberty of speech and of the press. The article, however, soon became a common topic of conversation, and, although the convention had broken up and most of the members had gone home, the article was revised and a new edition issued, making it read as we have quoted it. We have been told that the error arose from an omission by the transcriber. The correction, however, is fatal to the "liberty of speech and of the press," as it leaves the "odious gag-law" of our Discipline, which forbids the sowing dissensions by inveighing or unchristian railing, among those which were adopted by the convention in their first article. Alas for the infirmities and inconsistencies of poor human nature! Our would-be reformers have justified slavery, and forbid all interference with

their right to traffic in human flesh, while their vociferations about liberty and equality were yet sounding in our ears; and have adopted "a gag-law," while they were complaining of the restrictions their brethren had imposed upon the liberty, or rather the licentiousness, of speech and of the press!

To conclude, it is entirely indifferent how the framers of the article we have been reviewing may attempt to explain or modify it. The principle upon which it is founded, is totally, *radically* wrong, and therefore no modification of it can make it right. It is an attempt to lower the standard of Christian morals to the weakness and imperfection of human legislation; to make the obligations of Christian duty succumb to human authority. The moral precepts by which Christians are to be governed are enacted by infinite wisdom and purity, and are enforced by higher and holier sanctions than human laws. They admit of no evasion, nor authorize any compromise with either the spirit or practice of the world. We must obey God rather than man. The article is therefore totally improper in any system of Christian discipline or ecclesiastical government.

The articles will be taken up in regular succession. Two things we are certain to make very evident in our subsequent remarks:—First, That it is much easier to find fault with our Church government than to improve upon its provisions; and, secondly, that if it were true, as has been charged, that our people are under the arbitrary domination of the travelling preachers, the new Church only presents a choice of evils—the liberty of transferring our allegiance from itinerant to local preachers.

We have already shown the result of the only effort which the convention of reformers made to innovate upon our *moral* discipline; and from the solitary sample we have exhibited, we think it will not be regretted by their best friends that they did not proceed farther. We have understood that many charitable people have been led to suppose that the consequences of the rule we alluded to, in reference to slavery, were not foreseen by the framers of it. We assure them, however, that the rule was adopted solely in view of that subject, and for this we have the authority of some of the framers of the constitution themselves. We are, however, led to hope that many of the other evils growing out of its adoption were not foreseen, notwithstanding the boasted talents of the convention, otherwise we charitably hope the rule would have been restricted to the right of property in slaves, however desirable it might have been to conceal this deformity. We shall now inquire whether this assembly of reformers were better versed in the science of Church government than in morals.

The first two articles read in the *revised* edition as follows:—

"I. The articles of religion, general rules, means of grace, moral dis-

cipline, rites and ceremonies of the Methodist Episcopal Church, are hereby declared to be the rules of faith and practice for those societies which may unite in this association; *and the mode of administering the same is hereby adopted, except where contravened by some other article.*"

"II. Each society or Church shall have the sole power to admit *serious persons* into full membership, and to regulate its own temporal concerns, in accordance with these articles. The stewards to be elected by the male members, over the age of twenty-one years, and the leaders by the respective classes annually."

Our readers will bear in mind what we have apprized them of in our former remarks—namely, that we intend to inquire into the fitness and propriety of the new constitution, as a substitute for our present economy. We should have had nothing to do with the polity of the separatists, if they had not introduced it by a preamble complaining bitterly of the Methodists for not having acceded to their wishes, in reference to the innovations they proposed to make upon our government and discipline. The articles profess moreover, "to exhibit a plan explanatory of the changes they desire," in order to "meet the demand which has been often made by their opponents;" and as this is the first "plan" they have ever condescended to give us, we are for the first time indulged with an opportunity of examining the merits of the "reform," for which they have so long and so urgently contended.

We hope, therefore, we shall not be thought to be querulously interfering with the convention, about the order and arrangement of their own household affairs. When folks go to housekeeping, they may be safely permitted to manage their affairs in their own way. We are only desirous to justify ourselves for having refused to permit them to alter our arrangements, and to model them according to their fashion, in despite of the wishes of the great body of our people. We wish to show that under the regulations proposed in the new "plan," we could not keep house at all, and, therefore, were not to blame for rejecting their counsel, or resisting the vehement demands with which they urged upon us their projects of reform.

The change proposed by the second article in the mode of admitting members into the Church, we deem inexpedient for several reasons. We have known no society or Church in which all the members were qualified to decide in such matters, in all cases. A large majority of many of our societies will often be found to consist of young members, whose knowledge of the varieties of human character is necessarily very limited. It cannot be expected of such, that their religious zeal and fervour should be sufficiently attempered by the maturity of Christian experience or Christian knowledge. By such, nothing would be required of a candidate but his own professions, provided they were accompanied with the

outward manifestation of the same ardour of feeling by which they themselves were animated. The caution and prudence of the senior and more deeply-experienced members, would be received as the dictates of mere worldly policy, and would be overruled accordingly. The reception of the applicant would have to be decided by votes—not *weighed*, but *counted*. The admission of the candidate would depend upon other contingencies than that of his real fitness; and thus persons would often be introduced into the fellowship of the Church through the hasty and inconsiderate zeal of the junior members, whose religious concern, being the fugitive effect of suddenly-excited feeling, would evaporate in an ebullition of passion, and leave them with no fixed and abiding principles of action; and as such principles alone can sustain a religious and self-denying Christian character, the Church, in all such cases, would suffer in all her members the obloquy and reproach of individual delinquency.

It will, perhaps, be answered, that this odium has been often incurred under the present regulations of our Church, and this will be readily admitted; but the allegation, so far from weakening, really strengthens our objections to the new plan. If under an economy where the applicant must pass the ordeal of frequent examination in class-meeting, and finally be admitted by the pastor, upon his own knowledge of the candidate and upon the recommendation of his class-leader, whose duty it is to examine him freely and fully upon the subjects of Christian doctrine and experience, for at least six months; if, we say, under such restrictions, improper persons still find their way into our communion, what would be the consequences of making their admission depend upon the acclamation of a whole society—a society where men and women, young and old, and even children have an equal right of suffrage?

The foregoing remarks are made upon the presumption that the members, individually and collectively, intend to do right. But it is easy to conceive a state of things, in which, under the new plan, the admission of partisans, reputed to be “serious persons,” *may greatly subserve the purposes of a party in the society*, in respect to some of the many elections provided for in the new constitution. If an election of stewards, leaders, or delegates to the annual conference or General Conference be a contested matter in the society, it may become the temporary interest of the different parties to procure the admission of auxiliaries, whether they be fit associates in a religious community or not. In such cases, what strife and contention would be engendered, and what schisms would be created by the disappointed ambition of rival candidates, when they failed to procure the admission of their friends and supporters!

But this is not all. The gospel, in its renovating efficacy, often reaches the most degraded castes of society, especially in our cities. If such, under the influence of the most contrite feelings, become applicants for admission

into the Church, it will be necessary, under the new constitution, that the character of the applicant should be canvassed before the whole body, when, of course, those who object to the admission will have a right to state their objections and expose the whole of a character over which both Christian charity and prudence would desire to cast a veil. The applicant may be rejected, and the very next day the whole town would know both of the rejection and the reasons for it. If by the Church be meant a class, then the applicant, if he has occupied a degraded rank in society, may apply to a class which, under the authority to refuse admission to any whom they deem less honourable than themselves, may be abundantly too genteel to admit an outcast. Their rejection fixes a mark of reprobation upon him, and he must go without the benefit of Christian fellowship until he can find a class composed of those who have been taken from a walk of life as degraded as his own.

Under our regulations the preacher in charge admits upon trial, and after a probation of six months, if the class-leader, whose business it is to make himself acquainted with the moral character and Christian experience of the candidate, be free to recommend him as one who continues to evidence his desire of salvation by an upright life and Christian conversation, he is admitted into full membership. In the country, where the candidate is generally known, no other precautions are necessary to prevent impositions; but in cities the practice is for the preacher to bring the application before the leaders' meeting, and if no proper objection be urged, the preacher announces the admission at the next love-feast. In this process there is no unnecessary exposure of faults or failings, even in reference to those who are not received into the Church. The select body of leaders alone hear the objections, and if any injury is done to the reputation of those who have been refused admission, it is known only to those whose official standing in the Church is a guarantee for their prudence.

Upon the whole, we think the impartial reader, who carefully compares the new plan of admitting members into the Church with that which we have so long practised, will agree with us, that it is much easier to innovate than to reform. The separatists will find, after their scheme shall have been as long subjected to the infallible test of experience as ours has been, that it was not without reason that we hesitated to enter with them the regions of fancy and speculation. We are satisfied yet to adapt our system of government and discipline to men as *they are*, and as they ever have been. It will be time enough to conform them to the occasions and requirements of men as they *should be*, after so desirable a change shall have passed upon human nature.

The innovation upon which we have been commenting is not a novel pretension in our Church, at least in principle. In the excellent notes

upon our Discipline, written at the request of the General Conference, by Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury, and published in the year 1798, the subject is placed in so clear a light, that we shall transcribe their remarks for the benefit of our readers. The edition of the Discipline which contained this commentary is now out of print, and, we presume, that to most of our readers the weighty arguments and forcible observations of those apostolic men, and fathers of American Methodism, will be as new as they are useful. We are not ashamed to own that, notwithstanding the cruel and unjust aspersions which have been made upon the characters of Dr. Coke and Bishop Asbury, by the M'Cainites, our veneration for their memories remains unabated. Their zeal for the cause of truth and righteousness, their entire devotion of time, talents, and property to the great work of evangelizing the world, which they kept steadily in view, never losing sight of it for a moment, and to which object they sacrificed every personal consideration of comfort and convenience, assures us of their sincerity; while their acknowledged talents, their deep piety, their long and varied experience, will enforce their opinions and their advice upon the Methodists, in every succeeding generation, with sanctions that go at once to the understanding and the heart with conviction. The bishops in their commentary, (pages 74-76,) say:—

“He [the preacher in charge] is also to receive members upon trial, and into the society, according to the form of the Discipline. If this authority were invested in the society, or any part of it, the great work of revival would soon be at an end. A very remarkable proof of this was given, several years ago, by a society in Europe. Many of the leading members of that society were exceedingly importunate to have the whole government of their society invested in a meeting composed of the principal preacher, and a number of *lay elders* and *lay deacons*, as they termed them. At last the preacher who had the oversight of the circuit was prevailed upon, through their incessant importunity, to comply with their request. He accordingly nominated all the *leaders* and *stewards* as lay elders and lay deacons, with the desired powers. But, alas! what was the consequence? The great revival which was then in that society and congregation was soon extinguished. Poor sinners, newly awakened, were flocking into the Church of God as doves to their windows. But, now, the wisdom and prudence of *the new court* kept them at a distance till they had given full proof of their repentance: ‘If their convictions be sincere,’ said they, ‘they will not withdraw themselves from the preaching of the word on account of our caution; they themselves will see the propriety of our conduct.’ Thus, whilst the fervent preacher was one hour declaring the willingness of Christ immediately to receive the returning sinners, the wisdom of the lay elders and deacons would, the next hour, reject them even from being received upon trial, unless they had been before *painted sepulchres*.

*inwardly full of dead men's bones and rottenness.* The preacher who had the charge of the circuit nearly broke his heart, to see the precious souls which God had given him kept at a distance from him, and thrown back again upon the wide world by *the prudent lay elders and deacons.* However, at his earnest entreaty, he was removed into another circuit by the Conference, under whose control he acted, to enjoy the blessings of *the Methodist economy.* The revival of the work of God was soon extinguished, and the society, from being one of the most lively, became one of the most languid in Europe.

"Glory be to God, *all* our societies throughout the world, now (1778) amounting to upwards of 160,000, have been raised, under grace, *by our ministers and preachers.* *They, and they only,* are their spiritual fathers under God, and none others can feel for them as *they* do. It is true, that on great revivals the spiritually-halt, and blind, and lame, will press in crowds into the Church of God; and they are welcome to all that we can do for their invaluable souls, till they prove unfaithful to convincing or converting grace. And we will not throw back their souls upon the wicked world, whilst groaning under the burden of sin, because many on trial quench their convictions, or perhaps were hypocritical from the beginning. We would sooner go again into the highways and hedges and form new societies, as at first, than we would give up a privilege so essential to the ministerial office and to the revival of the work of God.

"'The Master of the house [God] said to the servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and *bring in hither* the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room.' He obeys his God without asking permission of any society whether he should obey him or not. 'And the Lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and *compel them to come in,* that *my house* may be filled.' Luke xiv, 21-23. The servant answers not to his God, I will comply with thy command as far as my society, or my leaders or stewards will permit me. Again: the Lord says to Ezekiel, chapter xxxiv, 2-10, 'Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, *neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost.* And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd; and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. Therefore, ye shepherds, hear the word of the Lord; As I live, saith the Lord God, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock; therefore, O ye shepherds,

hear the word of the Lord ; thus saith the Lord God ; Behold I am against the shepherds ; and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock,' &c. Now what pastors, called and owned of God, would take upon themselves this awful responsibility, if others could refuse to their spiritual children the grand external privilege of the gospel, or admit among them the most improper persons to mix with and corrupt them. Truly, whatever the pastors of other Churches may do, we trust that ours will never put themselves under so dreadful a bondage. It is in vain to say that others may be as tender and cautious as the *pastors* ; for the *pastors* are the persons responsible to God, and, therefore, should by no means be thus fettered in their pastoral care. And those who are desirous to wrest out of the hands of ministers this important part of their duty, should rather go out themselves to the highways and hedges and preach the everlasting gospel, or be contented with their present providential situation.

“ Besides, the command of our Lord, Matt. xxviii, 19, ‘ Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing* them,’ &c., is addressed to *pastors only*—to his disciples, and through them to all his *ministering* servants to the end of the world. But if ministers are to be the judges of the proper subjects of *baptism*, which is the grand initiatory ordinance into the visible Church, how much more should they have a right to determine whom they will take under *their own* care, or whom God has given them out of the world by the preaching of his word ! For ministers to spend their strength, their tears, their prayers, their lives, for the salvation of souls, and to have both themselves and theirs under the control of those who never travailed in birth for them, and, therefore, can never feel for them as their spiritual parents do, is a burden we cannot bear. Thus it is evident that both reason and Scripture do, in the clearest manner, make the privilege or power now under consideration essential to the gospel ministry.”

We have noticed that part of the second article which relates to the mode of admitting members into the Associated Methodist Churches, and, we hope, have shown that the innovation would be exceedingly dangerous to us, if ingrafted upon our economy. We must now refer to the change made by this article in the condition of membership. In the General Rules of our society, it is required of those who enter our communion, that “ they have a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins ;” and that they continue to manifest a desire of salvation by a life and conversation conformable to this desire. And then follows a particular specification of gospel requirements, which are deemed by the Church as necessarily written by the Holy Spirit upon every truly-awakened heart. These General Rules have been adopted by the convention, except where contravened by the articles of association ; and among those which are so contravened,



we find the condition of admission into the Church. The second article says, "Each society or Church shall have the sole power to admit *serious persons* into full membership:" so that the only demand made of those who apply for admission, is, that they be "serious persons"—a demand so indefinite, that we do not know its precise boundaries; but we are very sure that it will include many classes of "persons" who have not even "the form of godliness," much less seeking the power of it. It will, however, afford our opponents an advantage over us, by inducing members to enter their pale who are not prepared to comply with the terms upon which we receive members. Whited sepulchres—Christians "from the teeth outwards"—may find all they want in the new Church. It is now no longer a reproach to be a member of a Christian Church; it has even become reputable to be so; and those who desire Church membership from worldly motives, will naturally seek a Church which requires nothing more of them than that they shall have the reputation of being "serious persons." The new condition of membership is in perfect keeping with the fifteenth article. The slave-dealer, however unrelentingly he drives his trade, the man who dishonestly pleads the act of limitation to avoid the payment of a just debt, and the avaricious wretch whose bowels of compassion are not moved while he strips his brother of his bed and casts him into prison, may, nevertheless, be a very "serious person." In short, the change is a trap, very well calculated to catch the rich, who are willing enough to acquire the reputation of being Christians, provided it can be had without the sacrifices which Christianity requires. To this advantage our opponents are welcome. Rich men are not necessary to us; though many of them have found us very necessary to them when they have been brought to seek the salvation of their souls. Methodism will cease to be a blessing to the world whenever the Methodists receive and retain among them those who are too rich, too honourable, or too full of worldly wisdom, to submit to the discipline of the Church. Both our prosperity and usefulness depend upon our steadfastly adhering to our original conditions of membership—"a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins;" and the giving evidence of their desire of salvation by an upright walk and a Christian conversation, as is more fully expressed in our General Rules.

The second article furthermore provides, that "the stewards shall be elected by the male members over the age of twenty-one years, and the leaders by their respective classes annually."\*

\* There is something mysterious connected with the word, "*annually*," as it appears in the revised edition of the Conventional Articles. It is not to be found appended to the second article in the *first* edition, nor does it appear in the articles as published in the "*Mutual Rights*," although the paper containing them was issued subsequently to the revised edition, published in a pamphlet form. It will not be expected of us to account for this fact—our readers are quite as well qualified to do so as we are.

With respect to the election of stewards by the members, under certain modifications of the privilege, we confess we cannot see any particular objection ; and under our economy they are elected by the quarterly-meeting conference, composed, for the most part, of laymen and local preachers. The preacher in charge, however, has the nomination ; and when it is considered, that upon the faithfulness and zealous endeavours of the stewards, particularly on the circuits, the preacher's support chiefly depends, it will not be thought unreasonable that he should have such a participation in the appointment of these officers. This is the rather necessary, because, while in office, the stewards are in no way amenable to the pastor for the discharge of their official duties ; but are accountable only to the conference which elects them.

But under the new economy, the stewards are not made accountable anywhere for their official conduct. They are not like class-leaders, to be elected *annually*, and in the nature and fitness of things can only be responsible to their constituents, while the constitution provides no way in which these constituents can bring them to account for any official delinquency, except it amount to such immorality as would deprive them of Church membership. How strange that men, making such high pretensions as our reformers, should commit such egregious blunders in legislation !

Concerning the new mode of appointing class-leaders, we have much to say, and much which it greatly interests the members of our Church deeply to reflect upon. This is one of the innovations of which we have been most afraid from the beginning. It is among those which are most plausible in theory, but most dangerous in practice, of all the changes which have been proposed in our economy ; and its introduction would require little else to destroy our whole system of itinerant ministration, and make the Methodists a curse rather than a blessing to the whole Christian world.

Of all the institutions of Methodism, none, except the itinerant ministry itself, is of half the importance, or has had half the effect in promoting the cause of religion, as class-meeting. It is not easy for the members or ministry of other communions to appreciate the value of class-meeting to us ; because they are not necessarily required by those who are provided with a settled ministry. The minister who resides permanently among his flock, can, in various ways, make himself acquainted with his communicants, and personally give the particular instruction, reproof, or exhortations which may be suitable to their individual cases. His personal intercourse with his charge, will, if he be anxious to make the inquiry, make him acquainted with the religious standing of every individual whom the great Shepherd has placed under his care ; and he may find the suitable time and place for the necessary inquiries and advice. But to an itinerant ministry this is impossible. His time is chiefly occu-

pied in riding and preaching ; and his transient sojourn at any one place, does not afford him time to become personally acquainted with a great proportion of his flock, much less to have that full and unreserved communication with them, which would enable him to ascertain their religious state, and to give the religious instruction which their particular circumstances severally require. To supply this lack of service, our class-leaders come in aid of the travelling preachers. They are, in fact, auxiliary pastors of the Church, watching over the souls of their brethren, and leading them, both by precept and example, to work out their salvation. They should be, and mostly are, men of irreproachable character, of deep piety, and much experience. Residing among the members of his class, the leader necessarily becomes acquainted with their deportment in society ; and from their connexions and occupations in life, can infer the peculiar temptations to which they are liable. He is, therefore, prepared to guard them, by suitable admonitions, against the temptations which may most easily beset them, and to give them advice and encouragement under circumstances of peculiar trial. Through the class-leaders, the itinerant pastor, whose services are extended over a wide field of labour, becomes acquainted with the state of the society, and is directed to such as particularly require his care, either from affliction of body or mind ; and also such as, walking disorderly, require to be dealt with according to the directions of Discipline. Without these agents, our great missionary work could not be carried on. Those who are gathered into the fold of Christ by the preaching of the word, would be mostly lost for want of pastoral care. The ministry would know little or nothing of the religious state of the membership, and the communion of the Church would become a by-word and a reproach, even among the men of the world.

The appointment of the class-leaders—so necessary to the pastors in fulfilling the duties imposed by their commission, to feed the flock of Christ, taking the oversight thereof—has been, of course, given to the preachers in charge of circuits and stations, who are chiefly responsible to God for the souls committed to their care. To take from them this prerogative would be to compel them to commit the souls whom God had given them for their hire to the keeping of those whose gifts and qualifications they deemed inadequate to the trust, and over whom they could exercise no control, however the societies might decline in spirituality through their negligence or incapacity. It is true, that a preacher, recently come to the charge of a circuit or station, may not be able alone and unaided to select the most proper person to fill a vacancy which may have happened among the class-leaders, nor will he pretend to do so. He can always find senior brethren, stewards, local preachers, &c., to advise with upon such an occasion ; and as he can labour under no temptation to make an improper selection designedly, he will not fail to resort to the best counsel he can

find. And it is a remarkable fact in the history of our Church, that the members are very much attached to their class-leaders, each preferring their own, no matter how he may be excelled by others in talents or gifts. In fact, the cementing influence of these little spiritual associations can only be known to those who have enjoyed them and have entered into their spirituality. In these little meetings the soul is at once softened by sympathy and invigorated by example ; is melted into tenderness by those who mourn their unfaithfulness, while the experience of those who are strong in faith encourages the weak to redouble their diligence and to "press toward the mark for the prize of their high calling of God in Christ Jesus." They are mutually comforted by their mutual faith. No worldly motives, no temporary purposes, can have any influence here. Shut out from the world and its anxious cares, they here think and speak only of the concerns of their souls. The leader, possessing the confidence and love of the members, speaks freely and fully to the case of each, reproving, exhorting, and comforting, as the case may be, with all long-suffering and kindness. While the law of love governs his heart he is not afraid to probe to the bottom every wound, and however searching be his inquiries, and however close be his advice, it is received in a corresponding spirit ; and the man must be incorrigible who is not benefitted by such religious fellowship and communion.

Into these spiritual associations, those soul-cementing little bands, it is proposed, by the new system of government, to introduce the demon of discord, by an annually-contested election for class-leaders. Every class is to be converted into an arena for contending partisans, and it requires little sagacity and less Christian experience to anticipate the result. We object to the innovation,—

*First.* Because those best fitted by their piety would not be candidates in such a contest. The most pious are always the most retiring. They who are best acquainted with their own hearts will always be best apprized of their own weaknesses and infirmities, and will have the humblest opinion of their gifts. They will, therefore, gladly decline the responsibilities for which true humility will always suggest they are incompetent, and the field will be left open for the froward and the aspiring—as unfit as they are anxious to acquire pre-eminence in the Church. We have never yet seen a man who considered himself eminently qualified for the office of a class-leader who was really fit for it ; nor have we seen any who have been forward to enter into the ministry that have not given melancholy proof that they had run before they were sent.

This is a fact that developed itself very early in our Church, and perhaps in most other Churches. It has its origin in the very constitution of human nature. The Rev. Charles Wesley was well apprized of this truth, and has expressed it in his peculiarly-pointed manner :—

“How ready he is to go,  
Whom God has never sent ;  
How cautious, diffident, and slow,  
His chosen instrument !”

*Second.* In the competition for class-leaders each class will necessarily be divided, and it cannot fail to happen, that some warmth, if not bitterness of spirit, will be created. The person elected will come to the discharge of his very delicate duties with the certainty that a minority of the class were opposed to his election. Will he be under no temptation to think less favourably of his opponents than of his supporters? It would be requiring more strength of mind than usually pertains to men, however good they may be, to suppose them not susceptible of this bias. But if he could be superior to such weakness, is it to be expected of all or even most of the minority, that they will be equally free from such influences? And if not, how will they receive the close dealing which a class-leader is bound to use with those placed under his care? When, in the strict discharge of his official duty, he points out anything which he judges blamable in their deportment, nothing is more certain than that some would attribute it to the feelings which had arisen in the mind of the leader toward them, in consequence of the part they had taken in the previous election. How impenetrable must such an opinion render them to the rebuke or even the advice of the leader!

*Third.* In the city stations the female classes meet separately; and how it will comport with prudence or discretion to agitate these with annual elections for leaders we submit to the serious consideration of our brethren, especially as they cannot have the acquaintance with the candidates and with their deportment in the world which might govern the *male* electors in their choice. But in some, nay, most of the classes, a majority of the members, male and female, are too young and have too little experience to be qualified to judge at all of the qualifications which fit a man for the important duties of a leader. With such persons, zeal and fervour is everything; and a good singer, with a competent store of camp-meeting songs, would have an incalculable advantage in the election. The sobered feelings of the veteran, war-worn Christian, his prudent councils and wise precautionary advice, though essentially necessary to the young converts, are far less to their taste than the fiery zeal and enthusiastic devotional exercises of those whose feelings are less under the control of an enlightened understanding and well-disciplined judgment. We have known men in our day, who, though unstable as water, and not at all exemplary in their deportment before the world, from the warmth of their public exercises, and an unaccountable ability to waken up such feelings in others, would have outpolled, in a class of young people, the best men and the best class-leaders in the connexion. What would become of the Church if the

instruction and discipline of our young members were committed to such leaders, is easy to foretell without the spirit of prophecy.

*Fourth.* Suppose it should happen, as it often has happened, that the majority of a class, and the leader, too, become lukewarm in religion, a negligence of duty, and a manifest want of spirituality pervading the whole—the leader neglects the class, and the class neglect to assemble themselves together in their class-room. The few who retain their steadfastness mourn over the declension, but have no power to remedy the evil. The majority love to have it so; they love to enjoy the society of the vain and the thoughtless, and to enter into those frivolous amusements in which their former spiritual enjoyments have been dissipated and lost. The leader sees no harm in such *innocent* trifling, and yet neither the one nor the other wish to forfeit their membership, because there is some degree of obloquy attached to expulsion. The heart of the pastor may bleed in vain over these thoughtless sheep whose souls God had committed to his care, but he has no remedy. A faithful, spiritual leader might yet reclaim them; but the blind have the selection of their guide, and prefer one who will indulge them, and who is little less, or perhaps more, blinded than themselves. The pastor must mourn in silence or remonstrate in vain. The ruin is inevitable. The leader and his class ultimately backslide entirely, both in heart and in life, merely because the pastors of the Church, together with the senior part of the membership, have no power to interfere.

The innovation is an absurdity, because it proposes to take from the itinerant ministry the choice and appointment of those agents through whom only they can fulfil their pastoral duties to the Church; and gives no power to change them, however unfit they may be found to answer the purposes of their appointment; and it is moreover founded in the absurd supposition that all who enter our Church come into it fully prepared to judge of the qualifications necessary to those who are to be charged with their instruction in all the doctrines and duties of holiness.

*Fifth.* The innovation would not effect what it proposes, even were the evils it brings with it less than we estimate them. It proposes to give each member the privilege of meeting with the leader of his choice; but as every class would be more or less divided in the election, a part must necessarily meet under a leader whom they have not only not chosen but whom they have rejected. Under the present system, the members have at least an opportunity of selecting a leader from among those who have been constituted such; and as they have not been taught to look forward to an annual election for leader, nor solicited by rival candidates or their friends “for their votes and influence,” they are generally satisfied with, and edified by, those they have chosen.

Upon the whole, we feel humbly thankful to God for having been

saved from the sore evil of an annual election for class-leaders. And the Christian community have common cause of rejoicing with us, that those little associations of Christians, denominated class-meetings, distributed over our country, diffusing the benefits of Christian love and religious fellowship in their several neighbourhoods, have not been converted into so many arenas of electioneering conflict and strife, biting and devouring one another, and bringing reproach, not only on themselves, but upon the common cause of Christianity.

The leading objection, which from the beginning has been urged against the innovations proposed in our ecclesiastical polity, is, that the changes, if made, would destroy our itinerant system, and eventually produce in its stead a congregational system, or some other plan of government recognising a settled pastoral ministry. It is true that the advocates of these innovations professed no intention to destroy our itinerant plan; on the contrary, they would have persuaded us that they were its best friends. But it was easily foreseen that the principles upon which they acted, and the measures they adopted to effect their purposes, would as inevitably produce such a result as if it were intended. Many, however, continued to think the innovators sincere in their professions of attachment to the plan of an itinerant ministry, even up to the time of their late convention. It required a development of their whole scheme, in its practical details, to undeceive them, and this development has been made to the satisfaction of every friend of Methodism who is not weak enough to be misled by mere names. The constitution and form of government adopted by the convention, while it *proposes* an itinerant plan of operation, makes the itinerancy a subordinate appendage to the great system. It requires, indeed, of the itinerant ministers all the sacrifices and privations to which our plan subjects them—a submission to the appointments which are assigned them, whatever sacrifices of personal or domestic comforts such submission may involve,—while those who make these appointments are elected by laymen and local preachers, over whom the appointing power can exercise no authority whatever. These are terms upon which no man ought to consent to be an itinerant preacher; and if any do so, they will soon tire of the service in which they have engaged. To serve masters of their own choosing—to commit to those whom they themselves have selected, an absolute disposal of all that concerns their own temporal convenience, and the comfort and happiness of their families—is all that ought to be expected even of travelling preachers; but to require of them to submit to such authority, when vested in those whom they have not chosen, and over whom they have, and can have, no control—task-masters, who have been appointed over them by others, who do not themselves feel the weight of the power they have created—is too much to expect of human nature, and more, perhaps, than can be

conscientiously conceded. Our travelling preachers submit to the appointment of the bishops, who may send them to labour in any part of the United States. They do this because they believe the great plan of missionary operation in which they are engaged cannot be carried on without lodging somewhere the absolute power of distributing the labourers. They have, therefore, committed this power to those who, having participated, and continuing to participate with them in their labours and privations, have entitled themselves to their confidence; and who, partaking of the common suffering, and devoted to the common cause, have no local interests to subserve and no private ends to gratify; and, moreover, are prepared to sympathize with them in their sufferings, not only with a parental solicitude, but from an experimental acquaintance with their privations and sacrifices. The bishops have been selected, and the authority with which they are invested has been conferred, by the preachers over whom they exercise it; and this authority may be withdrawn or modified at the will of those who conferred it, and over whom it is exercised. But under the new system, the local preachers and laity, who make up a very large majority of the annual conferences, are to make the preachers' appointments, either in the collective body, or in such other way as they may direct; and in whatever manner this may be done, the travelling preachers, constituting a feeble minority in the conference, can make no resistance to the absolute domination of the laity and local preachers.

If the above allegations against the new system be just, we think it will be admitted by the most sceptical, that no permanent and efficient itinerancy can be established upon the principles of government adopted by the convention; and that they *are* just, a very cursory review will be sufficient to show.

By the sixth article it is provided that all the ordained ministers, travelling and local, shall have a seat in the annual conferences, and that there shall be a lay delegation equal to the whole number of ministers in said conferences; and it is subsequently provided, that these conferences shall provide the mode of stationing the travelling preachers, who shall be bound to submit to such appointment; and that the president elected by the conference, shall have the absolute disposal of these travelling preachers, during the year for which he is elected. It will be seen that in the constitution of these conferences the travelling preachers will bear a very insignificant part. They will probably be out-numbered, as ten to one by the local preachers, without taking the laymen into the account, who make up one-half of the conference. The appointing power with all its absolute prerogatives may therefore be lodged exclusively in the hands of local preachers or laymen, over whom this tremendous power cannot be exercised in any way whatever. The travelling preachers are expected to yield implicit submission to those whose authority they have not con-



ferred, and cannot limit or restrain ; and those, too, who do not participate in their privations and sufferings, and who cannot therefore be supposed, either justly to appreciate their amount, or properly sympathize with those who endure them. Add to all this that each annual conference has the power to make rules and regulations for its own government, and for the government of the circuits and stations within its bounds, limited only by the constitution, and it will be seen that the travelling preachers are to submit, even after their appointments, to such regulations as may be imposed upon them by the laity and local preachers, who constitute the great body of the annual conferences ; and, in short, will be reduced to the simple condition of domestic missionaries, doing whatever duty their task-masters may assign them, and that too without any stipulated compensation.

We know that a late commentator has alleged that the travelling preachers and the laity, constituting a majority in the annual conferences, will at all times be able to "keep the local preachers in order." But it must not be forgotten that the local preachers will be more likely to possess undue influence with the laity than the itinerant preachers. They will come up together to the conference ; will be identified in the local interests of their stations or circuits ; will be often found allied by marriage or consanguinity, and always by vicinity of residence and habitual intercourse. The local preachers being speakers by profession, the lay delegates will be dependent upon them for the necessary representation of the particular circumstances and wants of their constituents, and will, from all these circumstances, acquire an influence over the lay delegates which cannot be acquired by the small proportion of travelling preachers who will be found in the conference. It will even be in the power of the local preachers to exert much influence in the election of the lay delegates ; because from their ministerial services they will be extensively known among the membership, and cannot fail to give a powerful support to those candidates whom they may favour with their recommendation. It may be alleged further in support of the presumption, that the local preachers will acquire an undue preponderance in the new system,—that the history of all Churches who have adopted a confederated form of government, and have admitted a lay delegation into the councils of the Church, shows that the laymen are very remiss in their attention to their delegated duties ; and even in the late convention, the local preachers constituted a majority of the assembly. Whatever therefore may be the privileges of the laity, the ministry will eventually have the business of legislation pretty much to themselves ; and of these, the local preachers in the new Church will constitute an overwhelming majority, and thereby secure in fact all the power to themselves.

Thus the tendency of the system we are reviewing is inevitably to con-

gregationalism and a local ministry. The privations are all on the part of the travelling preachers, while the advantages are all in favour of the local preachers; and, as if the result were foreseen and provided for, each society or Church is, by the third article of the constitution, separately and distinctly vested with the right of property in the houses they may build for the purposes of public worship, or for parsonages, or which may be built for them by the contributions of their brethren.

Whenever, therefore, they may prefer a local to a travelling preacher, they may settle one, and refuse the use of the pulpit to the minister sent to them by the conference, as well as all contribution for his support. The travelling preacher may spend his strength and his health in preaching the gospel, and in raising societies and Churches, but his local brethren will enter into his labours and reap all the temporal benefits of his ministry.

The right which the Methodist Episcopal Church secures to her travelling preachers of occupying the pulpits in the several churches which belong to the stations or circuits where they may be appointed to labour, is all that is secured to them, as regards the Church property; and this privilege has been loudly complained of, and represented by our adversaries as vesting an absolute right of property in the bishops: because they have the right, "not of taking the houses from the people, but of taking the preachers from the houses." Absurd as this allegation is, it is rendered still more obviously so by the fact that, although the bishop may *change* the preacher, yet he must fill the appointments if there be labourers enough at his disposal. And he is moreover amenable for his conduct to those who appoint him, and over whom he exercises his authority. The Methodist houses of worship are considered as the common property of the Methodists, both preachers and people. They are often, with this view, erected chiefly by the contributions of those who have no personal occasion for their use. The necessity for the erection of a meeting-house in any place being ascertained, all we require is, that it shall contribute when erected, its quota of facility to the common missionary purpose for which we are associated; and that it be so settled, as not to be, under any circumstances, diverted from the use for which it was erected.

It is well that this article has made known the localizing system of our reformers. Who will contribute to the erection of a house of worship which is destined to follow the vicissitudes of religious opinion which may take place in any separate and isolated society? Under the operation of this rule, should the societies vested with a right in these houses renounce the doctrines of Christianity, and become Unitarians, or followers of Mr. Owen, the houses would, nevertheless, continue their property, and might be converted to any use which suited their purposes.

It may, however, be asked, whether the General Conference of the

associated Methodist Churches may not so alter the present constitution as to make it more favourable to an itinerant system. To this we answer, that the complexion of the General Conference is still more adverse to the interests of the travelling preachers than the annual conferences. In the latter, the itinerant ministry are at least sure of being present; but from the General Conference they may be excluded altogether. The representatives are to be chosen by the annual conferences, in which, as we have shown, the travelling ministry will constitute a very small minority; and there is nothing in the constitution which requires that any portion of them shall be chosen as representatives to the General Conference. The supreme council of the Church may therefore be composed of local preachers and laymen exclusively, notwithstanding that, if an efficient itinerancy be intended, the measures which will be the subjects of deliberation in that body must chiefly relate to the great missionary operations of the Church, and consequently to the duties and labours of the travelling preachers. If any will be itinerant preachers on such terms as these, they are welcome to the crown of martyrdom they covet; we shall not envy them the glory of suffering in such a cause. Indeed the absurdity of the conventional articles is so apparent, upon the supposition that they were really designed to provide for an itinerant system of ministration, that we cannot admit the supposition at all. The itinerancy has always been a popular part of Methodism,—and avowedly to abandon it would have frustrated all the plans of the leading separatists. They could have procured no followers from among the membership, had they proposed at once a congregational government and a settled ministry. When this comes to pass—and come it necessarily must—it will be represented and deplored as the result of uncontrollable necessity. Meantime, they were under the necessity of throwing out a tub to the whale, as their predecessors were in the New-York convention; and, in about the same length of time, the “Associated Methodists” will have about as many regular itinerant ministers as the memorable “Methodist Society” have.

We are aware that at first there will be preachers who will enter the list of itinerancy, calculating on their own personal popularity for the influence they hope to exercise in the Church and its councils. They well know that some degree of firmness and stability must be acquired by the Church authorities, before they can venture to control their choice of stations or circuits. The very paucity of their numbers will, in the outset, occasion them to be courted, and flattered, and followed, by those whose party spirit must be gratified by producing, through the agency of travelling preachers, contention, strife, and division in our Church: when the strife is over, and they cease to make proselytes; when a division of the spoil is to be made, and the preponderance of local influence begins to be felt, they can locate also, and thus have at least an equal chance in the

scramble for churches and congregations, which will inevitably occur. The people in the mean time will be cured of their itinerant prepossessions. Pains have heretofore been taken to alienate the affections of our membership from their itinerant ministers, by the most cruel imputations upon their characters, and the most slanderous misrepresentations of their motives. It will be against the travelling preachers that the disciples of the separatists will be taught to wage a war of extermination. Hatred to the itinerant ministers will be easily extended to the itinerancy itself,—and then everything will be adjusted to the liking of the seceding local preachers.

We expect to be misrepresented by our adversaries ; but let us not be misunderstood by our brethren of other denominations : we entertain no hostility to congregational Church government, nor to any other system of ecclesiastical polity which provides for and supports a settled ministry. We readily acknowledge the right of every Christian Church to judge for themselves, as to the way in which they can best provide for their own spiritual welfare, and greatly rejoice in the good which has been done, and is still doing by them, under the various forms of government, and different plans of operation which they have instituted. Perhaps the great Head of the Church has permitted us thus to differ in things indifferent, for the purpose of multiplying effort, and varying the means of spreading the gospel ; and we would not complain of the evident tendency of the system which has been adopted by the separatists from our Church towards congregationalism, if they did not urge upon us the adoption of their schemes, and bitterly revile us, because we tenaciously adhere to the institutions under which we have long prospered, and which have enabled us to be extensively useful in the common effort to diffuse Christianity throughout the world. We have, as a people, endeavoured to follow the leadings of Providence from the beginning, and we cannot change our present plan of operation until it shall please God to point out to us some other plan by which we can do more good. Meantime, the circumstances of our origin and our whole history clearly point to an itinerant system of ministration as our particular calling. This appears to be the portion of labour which has been assigned by the Lord of the vineyard to us as a people. We do not deem ourselves called to substitute or render unnecessary the labours of others, or the efforts of other Churches, but to supply their lack of service—to carry, or send the gospel to those who could not be reached in the ordinary methods to which a settled ministry are necessarily limited. Our whole system is essentially a missionary one, proposing to furnish an evangelical ministry, not only to those who desire it, but to those who are too ignorant to know the value of the privilege, and therefore cannot be expected to ask for such services. Other Churches may furnish ministers to those who call them—and we are happy that

those who ask can have : but to call and settle a minister, implies that those who do so, have already been brought to understand and experience the benefits of the gospel ; and, moreover, that they have the means and are willing to provide for the support of a minister. But when all who are willing to call and settle ministers are supplied, many precious souls will be destitute of the word of life, who are nevertheless included in the commission given by our Lord to his disciples, "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." To supply these, however, requires a system of missionary operation in which the personal comforts and conveniences of the missionaries can scarcely be consulted at all ; and such is our itinerant system. And the labours of our ministers are as necessary to other Churches as to our own. Ministers of other denominations often find settlements, in consequence of the religious interest which has been waked up in a neighbourhood by a Methodist itinerant, who, labouring in his vocation as a missionary, had visited it, and carried to the very doors of the people the blessings of the gospel. It is true, that such a system requires sacrifices of the membership as well as of the ministry. When the minister cannot be allowed to choose his place of labour, the membership must relinquish their right of choosing the minister who may be most acceptable to them ; and those who are able, must feel the religious obligation of supporting a ministry who are perhaps labouring among a people whom they have never seen. These are thought by some to be great sacrifices ; but, generally speaking, we have not found them so. On the contrary, we believe we have been greatly benefitted by the arrangement, even in our best established societies ; and that the itinerant system has greatly tended, not only to the spread of the gospel, but to preserve in the Church a zealous, laborious, and self-denying ministry.

The tenacity with which the Methodists adhere to their itinerancy, and the firmness with which they resist all innovations upon the system by which it has heretofore been perpetuated, will not be surprising to our brethren of other denominations, when they reflect that it has been much blessed to us ; and that we have been led to consider this feature of our economy, not only as the distinguishing feature of Methodism, but as the part of our plan which has been most efficient in that vast field of missionary labour which we have so long occupied, and by which we are encouraged to hope for still more extensive usefulness in the world. We ask nothing of our adversaries, but that they will let us alone. The world is before them, and there is ample room for their utmost exertions to reclaim sinners, and organize them into Churches. We shall throw no impediments in their way, if they design to pursue this good work. But it cannot be their calling to sow strife and dissension among brethren. If they prefer their local system, let them enjoy it. Following the best light

we have, we shall adhere to the institutions of our fathers, until some opening of Providence shall unequivocally direct us to a better course.

Nothing, in the new system of Church government, adopted by the late convention of reformers, has so much disappointed the public expectation, as the total abandonment of those republican principles which had been their constant theme during the seven years' war which they had waged against the Methodist Episcopal Church. We had been led to suppose, that nothing would satisfy these "free-born sons of America," as they fondly styled themselves, but a Church government founded upon the principles and copying the institutions of the civil government of our country. It was the want of this conformity in the polity of our Church to the constitution of the United States, that was made the ground of incessant reproach and declamation against us, by those who insisted upon a total change in our ecclesiastical economy. In vain did we allege the necessary and essential difference between Church and State governments. In vain did we show that they were totally dissimilar in their origin, in the authority with which they were intrusted, and in the design of their institution; and that it could not therefore be expected or desired, that institutions so entirely different in their nature, should be alike in their organization. In answer to all this, though it was found impossible to reason, it was nevertheless found very practicable to declaim; and the changes were incessantly rung upon the popular topics of liberty and equality, and the civil rights acknowledged by the constitution of our country to reside in the people. We were thus authorized to suppose the new constitution and form of government would be based upon the principle that all power resides in the people; and that the exercise of this power, in enacting and executing the laws, would be committed only to the representatives of the people or membership of the new Church. It could not fail to surprise those who had given credit to the loud and long professions of republicanism which had been made by the leaders of this wonderful reformation, that they commenced their career in constitution-making by a direct acknowledgment of the rights of *privileged orders* in their government; orders, too, not only distinguished by ministerial privileges, but to whom were allowed superior advantages and authority in legislation. It was not, indeed, expected that the new system would recognise in the people, that is, in the membership, a common right to preach the gospel, because the framers of it had all along admitted that this right could only be conferred by divine authority. But they had strenuously insisted at the same time, that the ministry had no superior claims in the government of the Church, and in this respect could only participate in the common privilege of legislating in person, or by their representatives. If so, why did the convention admit the whole body of the ministry into the annual conferences, and a representation from them

in the General Conference, equal in number to that from the membership? for this, although not secured, seems to have been intended. Nothing can be more essential to the existence of a republican government, than representation apportioned according to numbers; yet if the proportion between the membership and the ministry in the new Church shall be anything like that which exists in the Church from which they have seceded, the ministry will be to the membership as little more than about one to one hundred, and, of course, this promised paragon of excellence in Church government—this liberty and equality system—turns out to be one in which *one* local preacher embodies in his own puissant little self, as much legislative and executive authority as *one hundred* of the common people!

It will avail nothing to urge in justification of this feature in the new constitution, that in the Methodist Episcopal Church the government is intrusted to the travelling preachers; because we have never pretended to be influenced in our ecclesiastical economy by the abstract principles which have been so strenuously contended for by our opponents. We admit that our Church government is based upon the broad principle of utility. Our itinerant ministry having a common interest with the membership, and being enabled by their occupation to acquire a more perfect and comprehensive understanding of the general interests and wants of our community, we have been willing to leave to them the adoption of such prudential regulations as may be necessary to carry into effect the common purpose of our association, namely, "to spread Scripture holiness over the earth;" and we do this with perfect safety while we have confidence in the piety and intelligence of our ministry; while, from their itinerant life, they are prevented from forming those isolated associations which would tend to localize their interests or circumscribe their views; and while they continue entirely dependant upon the voluntary contributions of the membership for their maintenance. In short, on the ground of expediency, which we assume as the foundation of our polity, we have many reasons to urge in favour of the existing regulations of our Church, and it will afford us the same justification when circumstances shall induce us to change them. But our reformers have never assailed the *utility* of our institutions, nor proposed to change them on the plea of expediency. They were deterred from this course by the amount and stubbornness of the facts that stood in their way. The utility of our institutions is attested by their success—a success without parallel in the modern history of the Christian Church. They could only be assailed by abstract disquisitions, and by contrasting them with popular political principles, with which in their nature and application they had nothing to do.

We were therefore held up to the community as enemies to the government of our country, because we did not conform our economy to the rep-

representative system, so happily adopted as the basis of our civil institutions. Our opponents had therefore pledged themselves that when they "set up for themselves" they would conform their Church polity to the civil constitution of our country. Instead of this, however, they have instituted a government, with just enough of democratical appearances to induce the membership to accept it, while, in fact, the local preachers are clothed with such powers and privileges as enable them to engross all the authority, both legislative and executive, in the Church. This is the more unaccountable because there was neither necessity, utility, nor safety, in making this sacrifice of the principles for which the reformers had so zealously contended. That there was no necessity for it, they have themselves acknowledged; for, in their petition to the last General Conference, the former convention had expressly prayed, that the local preachers might be identified with the laity in the representation which they desired to have in that body. The local preachers abandoned all claim to a distinct and separate delegation from their own body, and even to the privilege of being united with the delegation from the itinerant ministry. Such privileges could not, therefore, be deemed necessary to the good of the Church, or they would have been prayed for, or, at least, the claim to them would not have been renounced. The utility or even safety of the membership thus succumbing to local-preacher domination, we hope we have clearly disproved. If anything more was wanting we might add, that many of the circumstances which make it safe in the Methodist Episcopal Church to commit authority to the itinerant preachers are wanting in the body to which the new Church has given it. The permanent residence of the local preachers within circumscribed districts of country, not only precludes them from acquiring that knowledge of the general state of the Church essential to the adaptation of general provisions for her welfare, but also tends to localize their interests and feelings. "Local men have local views." Moreover, they are exempted from that wholesome dependence upon the laity for the temporal support, both of themselves and families, which, with us, infallibly preserves the balance of power. Nor is there in the new Church any substitute for this wholesome check upon the authority of their local-preacher legislators. They are no way amenable to the membership for their acts or doings. They are not the representatives of the people. The people are not their constituents, and therefore cannot, as is necessary in all representative governments, express by their votes their opinions in regard to their legislators or the laws they have enacted. If, as we are told by a late essayist in the *Mutual Rights*, "money is power," it will be obvious that it is unsafe to commit legislative authority to those over whose money matters the community exercises no control, and whose claim to the right of legislation is, at the same time, beyond the reach of those for whom they legislate. Hence it was unwise, as well as antirepublican, in



the laity of the new Church to give such an overwhelming influence to their local preachers, who were in no way dependant upon them, when they had felt such fearful apprehensions from the power of itinerant preachers, whose whole authority the membership could annihilate by simply tying their purse-strings.

Upon the whole it is obvious that, even in reference to the balance of power between the ministry and membership, the laity of the new Church have changed their situation for the worse; and this was the only change they ever hoped to make for the better. They always admitted that in the Methodist Episcopal Church the gospel was faithfully and effectually preached, the ordinances duly administered, the moral discipline unexceptionable, and the membership generally pious. But then, the government was not sufficiently republican,—the preachers were not sufficiently responsible. The preachers, however, subsisted by their bounty, and therefore could do nothing to the prejudice of the membership without at the same time compromising their own interests. Nevertheless, to avoid this imaginary Scylla they have run into a real Charybdis; for they have in effect given up the reins of government to local preachers, over whom they have no such salutary check or control; and, instead of a republican government, have established one, the distinguishing feature of which is a privileged order, and the predominating principle of which is its irresponsibility to the people.

The mention of money matters brings to our recollection a radical defect which we noticed in looking over the articles of association. There is no provision for paying the expenses of the delegates, either lay, local, or itinerant, to and from the General Conference. The local and itinerant delegates may do well enough perhaps without such a provision—they may preach and levy contributions on their way. But what are the lay delegates to do? If no provision is made by the circuits or stations in which they reside, nor by the General Conference, one of two things must take place,—either the lay delegates will not generally attend when the Conference is at a great distance from their residences, or the delegation must be selected from the rich members, who can, individually, bear the expense, to the utter exclusion of those whose circumstances in life will not justify the expense. Even of the richer part of the membership, few will be found so situated as to be able to leave their families for two or three months without great inconvenience: so that the selection must be confined chiefly to those who are rich, who have no families, and no business; and these will be hopeful legislators, in general, for a Church! If the delegates from a distance do not generally attend, the business must be done by those living in the vicinity of the Conference, and the wants and wishes of remote districts cannot be attended to, the inevitable consequence of which will be a dissolution of the confederacy; and when this takes place, into

how many fragments the associated Churches will be broken it is impossible to imagine.

If, on the contrary, the circuits and stations are expected each to provide for the expenses of their own delegates, the result will be the same. Some will be found too poor to avail themselves of their privileges; and in all the more remote circuits and stations the inequality of the burden will be a just subject of complaint, which, if not removed, must dissolve the association. The expenses of a delegate from some places must exceed that of others a hundredfold. It will therefore be contended, and justly, too, that expenses incurred for the common benefit should be equally borne by all. The funds out of which the delegates are to be reimbursed must, of course, be a common one, and its supply must not be left to the uncertain result of voluntary contribution, but must be collected by the equal apportionment of a general taxation. As the ministry have a distinct and separate delegation, they ought, in all conscience, to pay their own representatives, which, supposing their delegates to incur the same expenses as the lay delegates, would be one-half of the whole amount of the levy. This will be a heavy assessment, when we consider what a large representation they are to have in proportion to their numbers. Even the blessings of authority are not without their inconveniences. In this instance the power will be retained, but we shall be mistaken if an effort is not made to make a more equable distribution of its accompaniments.

We shall probably be told that the late convention afforded an instance of the willingness of the delegates elected by the membership to attend to their duties without compensation. We are not sure, however, that the expenses of many were not borne by those who sent them; and the record of the absentees, even under the circumstances of the extraordinary excitement in which the convention was got up, gives fearful presage of what will happen when party spirit has subsided. The delegation was also confined to those whose places of residence were either in the vicinity of Baltimore, or to such as were engaged in commercial pursuits, and who had other business in this city.

Extraordinary efforts were likewise made for the occasion, some idea of which may be formed from the fact that, in a neighbouring circuit, after advertising for a month in the newspapers, that a meeting of reformers would take place on a certain day at the county town, to elect delegates to the convention, *nine* persons met and elected *six* representatives! The partial representation which was obtained in the last convention is therefore of itself sufficient to show that something more must be done to insure a general return of delegates from all parts of the Union to the supreme council of the Church. In short, when men undertake to do business in which others have an equal concern, they entertain the reasonable expectation that the expenses attending the transaction will be borne equally by

all parties ; and the most that could be expected of the delegates is, that they will serve without any compensation for their loss of time, and this is more than many can afford to do. The result of the whole is, that the means of paying the expenses of the delegates must be certainly provided for by the Church. The only adequate and certain means that can be devised is taxation, and hence the new association have only the choice between taxation and dissolution.

When this necessity of resorting to taxation in a Church government, constituted according to the notions of our reformers, was suggested, some time ago, in the "Appeal to the Methodists," the objection was met simply by the question, "Could not the delegates be instructed by their constituents not to tax them?" To which it was only necessary to reply, that they certainly might ; but this would not remove the difficulty, inasmuch as it would still remain necessary to meet by some other means the expenses of the delegates to the General Conference.

We are told, however, that if the articles of association are faulty they can be mended ; and, indeed, they remind us of what the facetious Butler says of some religious creeds, which

—————"Were intended  
For nothing else but to be mended."

The idea of mending such a disjointed, incongruous system as the one we have been reviewing, is in the last degree absurd. It reminds us of the reply of Pope's postilion to his master's frequent ejaculation, "Lord, mend me." "Mend you!" said the postilion, looking at his crooked back and general deformity ; "it would not be half as much trouble to make a new one." There are in the system as many defects at least as there are articles, any one of which would be fatal to the success of the whole scheme. In fact, the principles upon which it is based are not only wrong but absurd ; and therefore the superstructure can neither be repaired nor remodelled to any useful purpose. The builders must lay a different and more solid foundation before they can erect a building of such magnitude and utility as they propose.

Those who speak confidently of mending the present constitution of the new Church at the next convention, have taken a very superficial view of the articles of association. Some alterations of minor importance may be made, because it may not be the interest of the local preachers to oppose them ; but none will or can be effected that will go to lessen their preponderance in the government of the Church, because the ministry will possess a representation in the convention equal to that of the laity, and can thereby prevent any changes which may be prejudicial to their interest. It is in vain, then, that the constitution provides, *in theory*, for its own amendment. Any effort to curtail the powers or privileges of the local

preachers, will be defeated by their own delegation and the influence they cannot fail to have over their personal friends among the lay representatives. It will not, therefore, be in the power of the next convention to lessen the relative proportion of ministerial delegates in that body, unless the preachers themselves desire it; and this we think is not a probable contingency. Alterations allowed by the constitution may be as impracticable as if they were forbidden. The constitution of the State of Maryland, according to its provisions, may be so altered by the people as to restrict the right of suffrage to freeholders only; but it is obviously as much impossible to effect such an alteration, as if it were prohibited entirely; because a large majority of the voters are interested in preventing it: and, for the same reason, it will be impossible to effect any alterations in the provisions of the articles of association, which give undue weight to the ministry in the government of the new Church. They will possess in the very body which only can change the constitution, an equal number of votes and a superior amount of talents and influence. The local preachers will therefore continue to possess a paramount authority in the Church government they have already formed, in spite of the siren song about liberty and equality with which they have been for the last seven years beguiling their enchanted hearers.

We proceed to notice some other provisions in the new constitution, which are worthy of attention. It will be recollected that among the regulations of our Church, none were so much complained of by our reformers, as the rule respecting such as should be convicted of "endeavouring to *sow dissensions* in the Church, by *inveighing* against our doctrines and discipline;" and the rule providing the method to be pursued in the trial of members who should be accused of violating the Discipline. It will, therefore, surprise our readers to learn that the reformers have adopted the first, without any alteration whatever, into their new code; and the other they have also admitted with this additional provision, "that nothing therein contained shall be so construed as to deprive an accused member of the right to challenge,"—a provision which cannot be practically admitted without rendering the expulsion of a member impossible, if he desires to retain his membership. It will be perceived that the right to challenge is not restricted in any way whatever. It is not limited to a right to *challenge for cause*; it is a right to challenge *peremptorily* any person, and any number of persons, who may be appointed on the committee, without assigning any reason for it whatever. So that if the accused shall only persevere in challenging, he may not only escape conviction, however guilty, but elude all the efforts of the Church to bring him to trial. How truly it has been said, that "to *innovate* is not to *reform*!" The right to object to any person who may be summoned to try a case involving the character or interests of one against whom he

had shown himself prejudiced, requires no ecclesiastical statute, without supposing great depravity in the administrators of discipline ; and should such depravity exist, its effects would be prevented by the superior judiciary, having appellate jurisdiction in the case ; but to give a right to challenge peremptorily, and that without limitation, is to defeat the ends of justice altogether, and to expose the communion of the Church to open profanation. Our reformers must try their hands upon this article again, whatever they may do with the rest. In its present shape it will never do. It is of itself sufficient to destroy all the ends of Christian discipline, and a few more abortive efforts to improve upon our Discipline, will, at least, have one good effect : they will teach innovators that, though no human system of government can be absolutely perfect, yet it is often much easier to point out defects than to mend them.

We know that the General Conference have anxiously desired to improve that part of our Discipline which relates to the trial of offending members, and have had under their consideration at different times, a variety of propositions to this effect ; but hitherto none have been proposed which were not more defective than that which they proposed to amend. We venture to promise on the part of the General Conference, that they will readily make any proper change in this matter, which may be suggested to them by either friend or foe. It is alike their interest and their duty to do so. But let him who advises an alteration be sure that he understands the matter ; that his situation commands a view of the whole ground. Let him not form his opinion upon views which he may have taken of city stations or circuits, where the societies are numerous, but adapt his plan to all the great variety of circumstances in which our membership are found in our widely-extended connexion. Many a plausible scheme, when viewed in the abstract, will be found to be utterly inapplicable to the circumstances of the people for whose benefit it is designed. The celebrated John Locke, author of the well-known work on the human mind, prepared, at the request of the proprietors of North Carolina, a constitution and form of government for the people of that colony, which was found upon the experiment so utterly inapplicable to the state of the population, that it was, after some feeble attempts to establish it, totally laid aside ; and the woodsmen met together and adopted a few simple regulations, much more suitable to their circumstances than the recondite production of that distinguished metaphysician. It should also be remembered by all constitution-manufacturers, that it is not by the want of laws only that a society, whether civil or ecclesiastical, may be placed in difficulties—they may be equally “embarrassed by too much regulation.” And in the instance to which we have alluded above, the members of the new association may find it as inconvenient and as dangerous to their peace and prosperity, to have introduced a rule into their discipline, by

which the most unworthy members may hold their membership in defiance of all the constituted authorities of the Church, as to have risked the improbable contingency of an accused member being refused the privilege of objecting to a hostile committee; especially, as such mal-administration would always find a corrective in the quarterly-meeting conference, unless a universal corruption had pervaded the Church; and in that case, a good man would not be very anxious to retain his membership.

But there is one effort at emendation, which seems to give the separatists great satisfaction; and it would seem hard to deprive them of at least one subject of gratulation, to console them for the manifest and total failure in the other parts of their code. The effort, too, comes to us with such an air of piety, that we would incline to commend it, if it were only for the habiliments in which it is dressed; for pious endeavours are always entitled to respect, though the opinions by which they are directed be ever so erroneous. But, with all our disposition to be merciful, we cannot spare our reformers this one matter of rejoicing. It is, notwithstanding its imposing appearance, an error, and it is our duty to expose it; that when, at their next convention, they commence reforming their recently-reformed code, they may correct this among other defects. We allude to the provision in the fifth article, which enacts, that "the first business of the quarterly conference shall be, to inquire into the official and religious characters of all its members."

Dr. Jennings, in his remarks on the conventional articles, lately published, chuckles over this rule of discipline, as a matter of great triumph over the old-side brethren. This rule may be practised, he says, in some quarterly-meeting conferences of our Church; but for such practice there is no rule of Discipline. Now we confess we did not know that such a practice ever did obtain among us anywhere; and we are very sure it ought not to be introduced, either as custom or discipline, for this obvious reason, that it would preclude all the lay members of the conference from the benefit of an appeal, if they thought themselves aggrieved by the decision of the conference, in reference to any matter which might be alleged against their religious characters. If upon such inquiry any allegations should be made against a layman, the conference must do one of two things,—either appoint a committee to investigate the charges, or bring the member to trial before their own body. In the latter case, there would be no superior judicatory to whom an appeal would lie; and in the former, the accused must appeal from the decision of the committee to the quarterly-meeting conference who appointed it, and before whom the charges were made,—that is, the member must appeal to the grand-jury who originated the indictment. In our annual conferences and district conferences this practice obtains; but the members of these conferences have an appeal to higher Church judicatories. But to subject class-

leaders and stewards, who are mostly laymen, to the same regulation, would be cruel and unjust, because it would deprive them of a privilege common to all the rest of their brethren. It is common among us for the quarterly-meeting conference to inquire into the *official* conduct, gifts, and qualifications of the members, but never into their moral or religious characters. They are to be dealt with as other members of the Church are, for any irreligious or immoral conduct, and have the same right of appeal. Upon a review of the matter, we think that Dr. Jennings will himself perceive, that the Methodist Episcopal Church had very good reasons for not requiring the quarterly-meeting conferences to pass upon the religious characters of their lay members, except upon appeals from the decisions of inferior tribunals.

But it would be endless to point out all the defects in the conventional articles of the new association. We have already exhibited the fundamental errors in this new scheme, to which the reformers had looked with so much confidence, as promising to show a pattern of excellence to all Christian denominations. But we must be permitted to trespass a little longer upon the patience of our readers, in order to show, that if the system was founded upon any practical principles, it could not be carried into effect, for the want of essential provisions which have been entirely overlooked by the convention.

For instance, it is provided that the annual conferences shall be composed of "all the ordained ministers, and an equal number of lay delegates;" but the constitution does not provide for the apportionment of the lay delegates among the several Churches, circuits, or stations. It will be easy to ascertain how many ordained ministers there are within the bounds of the conference, and consequently the aggregate amount of lay delegates who will be entitled to sit in that body; but the ratio of representation is nowhere settled by the constitution. Hence it will be impossible for any Church, circuit, or station, to ascertain how many delegates they are to elect. Some may send too many, and others too few. The Church in Baltimore, for instance, may send so many as to give them undue weight in the conference,—and other Churches may supply so few, that the lay delegates will not, upon the whole, constitute a legal proportion of the conference; and hence the *acts* of the body will be illegal, the membership not being adequately represented. If it be said that the annual conferences can remedy this defect, and apportion the delegation among the Churches according to numbers, or otherwise, we answer, that there must first be an annual conference before this *arrangement* can be made; and yet the arrangement must be made *before* the first conference can be legally constituted! A strange dilemma this to be placed in,—and that, too, by men who thought themselves competent to reform all the well-tested regulations of our Church. Again: suppose the

apportionment of the delegates to be somehow or other settled six months before the election, yet the relative proportion between the ordained ministers and the lay delegates may be changed, either before or at the conference. The candidates for orders, who may obtain the necessary recommendations in the interval, will be ordained *by the president,\* and two or more elders*, according to the constitution, either before or at the meeting of the conference, and will then be entitled *ex officio* to a seat in that assembly; thus rendering all its acts invalid, by increasing the list of ministerial members beyond the constitutional proportion. These difficulties are absolutely insurmountable; no human ingenuity can either elude or remedy them. The provisions of the constitution *cannot* be carried into effect; and therefore the associated Churches must either agree to disregard them, and act without a constitution, or call another General Convention forthwith. Even the General Convention which, according to article sixteen, is to meet in November, 1830, will not be able, according to the present organization, to remedy the evil; because there is the same want of any provision ascertaining the ratio of representation from the several annual conferences to the convention. It is nowhere said that the annual conferences shall be represented according to their numbers; and hence each conference is at liberty to send as many delegates as it pleases. The consequence may be, that any one or more of these conferences desirous to introduce particular provisions into the constitution, may insure success by a numerous and disproportionate delegation. One thing, and one thing only, seems to be carefully provided for in the conventional articles—namely, that there should be a *quantum sufficit* of local-preacher influence in all the departments of the new government; and so it will inevitably remain, whatever alterations may be made hereafter in other respects.

Upon the whole, we confess we did wait with some degree of anxiety, during the “ten days’ agony” of the convention, for the result of their deliberations. We did anticipate a system somewhat more plausible and imposing than the articles we have been reviewing; and consequently, that many would be led astray by its speciousness, and by an appeal to the political sentiments common to the Methodists with all the rest of our countrymen. Our fears were instantly dispelled, however, when we perceived that the new constitution was as anti-republican in its principles, as it was impracticable and absurd in its provisions. And now that the result is known, and our Church has escaped from the storm of passion

\* Was it an oversight, or was it by design, that the convention did not require the president to be taken from the body of ministers, although he is, during his continuance in office, invested with episcopal powers; having a right to ordain ministers, and to make all necessary changes in the appointments of the travelling preachers? For anything to the contrary in the constitution, these presidents or bishops may be laymen!



and party spirit which had threatened to shake it from its foundation and overwhelm it in irretrievable ruin, we feel like a mariner who, having endured a night of tempest when no human skill or power could guide him in safety, looks back in the morning, after the winds have been hushed and the clouds have dispersed, and sees on either hand the rocks amidst which an unseen hand had guided him in safety. While he cannot but shudder at the recollection of the dangers to which he had been exposed, the full tide of gratitude rushes upon his heart, and fills his soul with the delicious, absorbing sensation of thankfulness—thankfulness to Him who is the only sure and certain refuge in time of trouble. Here, then, we raise our Ebenezer; for hitherto the Lord hath brought us. Our enemies “have imagined a vain thing.” They set themselves to destroy the work of the Lord—a work he had owned and blessed, and made tributary to the salvation of thousands. Their efforts have failed. Neither cunning nor force have been able to move us. On the contrary, we have been compelled by our sufferings to “remember all the way in which the Lord our God hath led us”—to go back to first principles—to reassure ourselves of their correctness, and having done so, to cleave with full purpose of heart to the Lord, and to abide in the institutions of “our fathers.”

## A REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION AND DISCIPLINE OF "THE METHODIST PROTESTANT CHURCH."

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THE convention of reformers which assembled in the City of Baltimore, in 1828, constructed and published "Articles of Association," which we reviewed in the *Itinerant*—a periodical got up for the defence of the Church, by the Methodists in Baltimore, and continued monthly, from November 12th, 1828, to October 26th, 1831, under the editorship of the Rev. Melville B. Cox, who, subsequently, was sent to Liberia as a missionary, where he terminated his labours with his life, uttering with his latest breath the exhortation to us who survive him, "Though thousands fall, let not Africa be given up."

The review of the conventional "Articles of Association," taken from the "*Itinerant*," will be found in a preceding part of this volume. They were found so utterly defective, as to be wholly indefensible, and were, of course, to be amended. Accordingly another convention was held in the same place, in November, 1830, at which was adopted the name and title of "The Methodist Protestant Church, comprising the Associated Methodist Churches." The convention also adopted a "Constitution of the Methodist Protestant Church," containing a preamble and seventeen articles. The former articles of association had been before the ministers and members of the Churches for some two years—had been canvassed and discussed with great earnestness—and it was supposed the convention of 1830 would have collected all the light which had been elicited by the discussion, and would come up prepared to show the world the very perfection of wisdom in Church government. The following review of the document, also republished from the "*Itinerant*," will enable the honest reader to estimate its true value:—

The seceders from the Methodist Episcopal Church having finally settled and established their form of government, it becomes a subject of inquiry of some importance to the Christian world, to ascertain what improvements their erudite labours have suggested in ecclesiastical polity. After the abstract speculations upon the "Mutual Rights" of ministers and laymen, and the impassioned declamations against tyranny and oppression, with which the pulpit has rung, and the press has groaned for the last ten years, it is natural that we should be somewhat curious to learn what has been done by these great advocates of liberty and the rights of man since they have thrown off the shackles of authority and set up for themselves.

But those who have still adhered to the Methodist Episcopal Church, are much more concerned in this inquiry than the members of other religious communities. We do not attribute perfection to our ecclesiastical economy, and our whole history shows that we have always altered it whenever an alteration was recommended by an apparent utility. If, then, anything has been invented by our opponents which we might adopt with advantage, we should not hesitate to graft it upon our system ; or if any imperfection in our government and discipline has been remedied by the new plan, we should not feel it a degradation to learn wisdom even from our enemies. But if, on the contrary, we find that nothing has been mended, that the fine theories with which we have been entertained are contradicted by experience, and that what was made plausible when abstractly considered, is found inapplicable to the particular exigencies and circumstances of our religious community, we shall continue to live contented under an economy which, though it be not free from all objections, we do not know how to mend, and which has not been improved upon by our neighbours.

We shall not, therefore, be thought querulous in undertaking this review of the constitution and discipline of the Methodist Protestant Church, especially as we only design to contrast it with the economy which it professes to have improved. We design to give no just cause of offence, and cannot suppose that any will be taken, since a review has been already published by an advocate of the new plan, in which it is contrasted with the old system, greatly to the disadvantage of the latter.

But before we commence our remarks upon the new Church government itself, we must be indulged in a few observations upon the succinct history of Methodism with which it is prefaced. We had hoped that, having fairly declared their independence, the reformers would have exercised the right which we readily accord them, of forming a Church government to suit their own views and notions, without unnecessarily perpetuating the controversy with those whom they had left, by reiterating accusations against us which they knew to be exceedingly offensive, and which we have always averred to be unjust. If, indeed, they designed to wage a perpetual war with us, this preface was exactly calculated to fulfil their intention ; but this does not correspond with the professions they have made and are still making. They profess to desire peace, and an interchange of those kind offices which so happily obtain between the Episcopal Methodists and most of the sister Churches ; and yet they have prefaced their book of Discipline with a list of alleged grievances which cannot fail to enlist and perpetuate the most hostile feelings among their members against the members of a Church with which they affect a desire to cultivate and maintain the most friendly relations.

We could have forgiven the arrogance which induced them to associate

their visionary innovations with the real reformation effected by the instrumentality of the Wesleys, notwithstanding these innovations tended to destroy all the efficient parts of Mr. John Wesley's plan for proclaiming the gospel to the ends of the earth. Vanity is too natural an infirmity to awaken surprise or excite indignation ; and besides, we had been accustomed to it. We had long been amused with the self-complacency of reformers. We had often found them most incontinently associated with Luther, and Calvin, and Melancthon, and the other worthies who broke the shackles of Popery and delivered the Christian world from superstition and ecclesiastical tyranny. We were, therefore, prepared for any extravagance of this nature, but we had hoped that they had been convinced of the evil which a perpetuation of their quarrel with us would do to their own cause, and that they would avoid it for their own sakes, though the interests of the common cause of religion should fail, as it had failed, to influence them. We have been disappointed. Their book of Discipline is prefaced by a summary of their complaints against the Methodist Episcopal Church which are as untrue as they are injurious. While they continue these, no cordiality of feeling can be restored. The Methodist Episcopal Church would, by any reciprocation of ministerial services, tacitly admit the allegations to be just, and must therefore keep aloof from any propositions of this nature. We deny that the reformers were expelled from the Church for proposing or advocating changes in our ecclesiastical economy. We never did complain of temperate discussions on this subject ; but we disowned the disaffected members in Baltimore for publishing and circulating slander and calumny, both against the living and the dead. And for this we have the acknowledgment of at least three of their principal writers, who also professed to be authorized by those who had been expelled to make the acknowledgment in their names.

Perhaps the preparatory remarks were not authorized by the convention ; and we are more inclined to this opinion because we know there were some men of talents in that assembly, and the preface is so meagre and contemptible, considered merely as an abridged history, as to be totally unworthy of any deliberative body. We hope if this pitiful production has been foisted into the legal code of the Methodist Protestant Church by some meddling, officious individual, it will be disavowed, as while it continues to be apparently sanctioned by the Church, it must prevent every approach to reconciliation and Christian fellowship.

Before we proceed to the consideration of the new code, we must make a few more preliminary observations.

It had long been urged as an objection to the proposed lay and local representation in the General Conference of our Church, that it would be impossible for the distant conferences to send delegates ; they would not be able to find brethren of sufficient wealth and leisure to serve as dele-

gates; that those who are best qualified to render such services as would be required of delegates are generally engaged in avocations which demand their personal attention, and could not be absent from home from two to three months without sustaining great injury and pecuniary loss.

The result, it was contended, would be that the annual conferences which were remote from the seat of the General Conference would be represented by the conferences more immediately in the vicinity of the General Conference, and would, therefore, be governed by men not chosen by them, and whose location would prevent them from acquiring an adequate knowledge of the wishes and interests of their distant brethren, or whose local partialities would necessarily influence their measures. It was further urged that this would place these remote districts in a worse situation than at present. The travelling preachers are prevented by their itinerating life from forming those sectional partialities, and as they are constantly migrating, they could not find any personal gratification in favouring one part of their field of labour to the injury of the rest.

The prediction as to the partial representation which would take place under the new plan has been verified by the results, as given by the list of ministerial and lay delegates in the convention which formed the constitution we are about to review. The whole number of delegates elected to the convention was one hundred and thirteen. Of this number sixty-eight were elected from the Maryland Conference (within the limits of which the convention met) and the two immediately adjoining conferences of Pennsylvania and Virginia, constituting about three-fifths of the whole number. Of the delegates elected from these conferences, only twelve of the sixty-eight were absent, while one half of the delegates from Ohio failed to attend.

The absent ministerial delegates, travelling and local, were only eight, while the absentees among the lay delegates amounted to twenty-two.

The Ohio Conference, which it is probable contains more members than any other, had but eight delegates in the convention, while the Pennsylvania Conference had twenty, and the Maryland Conference had twenty-six.

It will be seen by these statements what the Methodist Episcopal Church had to hope from the much-vaunted representative plan of government so violently insisted upon by her disaffected members. Under all the influence of party heat and the novelty of the enterprise, the reformers failed to procure anything like a decent representation from any of the distant parts of the country. Ohio only elected sixteen, and one half of these did not find it convenient to attend; and it is likely that had the convention held its session in any place with which the merchants of Ohio had no commercial relations the delegation would have been still further diminished.

In our intended review we shall chiefly attend to the departures from our own system which we find in the new plan of Church government. These will be chiefly found in the constitution and discipline. Most of the positions which the convention call "elementary principles," may be either true or false, without detriment or advantage to the system which is said to be founded upon them; and hence we shall find some of the provisions of the new code in direct opposition to this bill of rights.

The best way to make a comparative estimate of the advantages and disadvantages of the two schemes of government under consideration is, to compare the different provisions they have severally made to effect the objects which both profess to consider essential to the accomplishment of the great purposes of their organization. Among the leading intentions of both plans, the most prominent is, certainly, the institution or the perpetuation of an itinerant ministry. To this feature in our ecclesiastical economy the Methodists, both in Europe and America, have chiefly attributed the success they have had in spreading the gospel; and whoever attentively reads our history will arrive at the same conclusion. We are not unmindful of other peculiarities of Methodist economy; but we think we speak the sentiments of our brethren generally, both of the ministry and laity, when we say that all the rest would have been comparatively inoperative without an efficient itinerant ministry.

The fundamental principle upon which this plan of ministration is based will be easily perceived, if we contrast it with any plan which allows or maintains a settled pastoral ministry. The latter supposes the people *to call the preacher of the gospel* to labour among them, and to stipulate with him the terms upon which he is expected to perform the required services; the first supposes the *preacher to call the people into the fellowship of the gospel*, and, consequently, that he goes to them without any stipulation whatever. In the one case we must suppose the people to have been previously brought to know, and in some measure to appreciate the value of, the gospel, and therefore to desire its ordinances; in the other case we may suppose them ignorant of the nature and design of the gospel, of their own need of its influences, and of any of the many blessings which it brings to those who receive it; and, consequently, we may suppose them very far from feeling any disposition to call a minister of the gospel to labour among them. Nay, as the heart of man is naturally averse to good and inclined to evil, we should be sustained as well by history as by rational inference, if we were to suppose him much more disposed to persecute the messengers of salvation than to invite or desire their ministry. The different plans of settled, stationary ministration, then, supply preachers of the gospel to those who call them, and who are able and willing to afford a pecuniary compensation to those they may call; the itinerant plan proposes to provide a ministry who shall be sent to call those who

do not know or appreciate the value of the gospel, and therefore do not desire it, or who, if they do desire it, are too poor to pay for it.

It will be perceived at a glance that such a plan must be executed by the ministry at great personal sacrifices. They must forego or exchange all the endearments of home for a life of toil among strangers, and that, too, without any stipulation or security for personal support or sustenance, much less of any provision for sickness, old age, or decrepitude. But this is not all. The plan cannot be made efficient without lodging somewhere an authority to distribute the labourers over the great field of labour. Otherwise some might be supplied abundantly, while others were destitute, and even the most needy might be most neglected. It will be readily acknowledged that this authority to appoint the preachers their places of labour is a tremendous investment of power wherever it may be deposited, and, accordingly, the preachers in the Methodist Episcopal Church have been careful to place it in the hands of men of *their own selection*, whose experience in the work gives them confidence in their wisdom and discretion, and whose characters afford a guarantee for their impartiality and parental feelings. Even in such hands this power is not left without control. It is regulated and limited in its exercise, and may, if abused, be withdrawn, or transferred to other hands, *by those who alone feel its exercise, and who alone can suffer from its abuse*. Bishops have been, and therefore can again be, deposed, and, in point of fact, are elected every four years; and elected, too, by those only over whom their authority is, or can be, exercised.

But with all these regulations, so onerous are the duties, and so numerous are the privations required of a travelling preacher, that the temptations to location are ever operating injuriously upon the great missionary work. Many of the circuits are so unprovided with decent accommodations for a preacher's family, and in other respects afford so inadequate a provision for his necessities, that, as the weight of his family increases, any prospect of bettering his temporal circumstances is almost irresistible. The Church is thus often deprived of the wisdom necessary in her councils, which can only be acquired by long experience in ministerial duties. It is therefore a desideratum in our ecclesiastical economy to devise some means of counteracting the tendency to location among our travelling preachers, without, at the same time, impairing the efficiency of our present plan.

But the new plan is so far from correcting this evil tendency, that it makes the same requirements, and imposes the same obligations upon the travelling preachers, *who are bona fide such*, while it takes from them the control of the executive power by which these demands are enforced, and leaves them entirely without adequate redress or remedy in case of the abuse of this power.

The appointing power, so essential to the itinerant system, can only operate oppressively upon the travelling preachers, because it is only exercised over them. It has no operation in relation to local preachers or laymen. They receive no appointments, and are not directed in any part of their religious duties by this authority; much less can it interfere with their temporal comforts or interests. We insist, therefore, that in all fairness and equity, wherever or with whomsoever this appointing power is lodged, the person or persons exercising it should be selected by the travelling preachers, and should be responsible to them only for the proper exercise of an authority which affects them exclusively, or in a degree which places all other interests below consideration. It is no matter whether this power be reposed in a bishop, a president, a committee, or a "conference:" if those who exercise the power are not appointed by those over whom it is exercised; if their choice may be controlled by the suffrage of others who are not pledged to the same submission and obedience; and finally, if those who are appointed to exercise this authority are not responsible for their administration to those whom they command, then they who are bound to obedience are slaves, and in the instance before us the servility is as unnecessary as it is degrading to the ministerial character.

In the Methodist Protestant Church the preacher's appointments are made by the annual conference, or in such mode as the conference may from time to time appoint. The conference is composed of one-half laymen and one-half ministers; and whether the appointments are made by the president of the conference or a stationing committee, in either case the appointing power will receive the authority to dispose of the preachers from the laity as well as the ministry, although the power thus conferred cannot affect the laymen at all. If the appointments should be made by the president of the conference, they will have participated equally in his election; and he will be amenable to the laity as much as to the preachers for his administration, although he cannot exercise the authority conferred by his election over the humblest layman of the conference. He will, moreover, be dependant upon the laity exclusively for his support, as he must derive it from circuits and stations within his conference district; and hence he must comply with the wishes of delegations from the wealthier circuits or stations, as these only can contribute anything towards his salary. Thus the preachers who place themselves under the stationing power of the conference, will have committed themselves to an absolute authority, not created by themselves, but authorized by their lay masters, who, participating equally in the elective franchise, and holding the purse-strings in their own hands, will bind upon them burdens which they will not touch with one of their fingers. Now we appeal to any considerate, disinterested man, if this is fair? If the travelling preachers consent, for the good of the Church, to go wherever they may be sent, whatever per-



sonal sacrifices it may cost, ought they not, in all reason and fairness, to be allowed the choice of the person to whom is committed the power of appointing them their several stations or circuits? Is it possible that ministers who preserve any respect for themselves, will continue long in a connexion where a master is appointed over them by those who do not participate in their privations and sufferings, and who cannot therefore sympathize with them; and a master, too, who is not responsible to them for any abuse of the absolute authority over them with which he has been invested by others.

But this is not all. Under the constitution the annual conferences may select any mode of making the preachers' appointments which they deem expedient. They may, therefore, delegate this authority to a committee of laymen, or, what is most likely, to the president, aided by an advisory committee of laymen. The laity will then send the preachers out as missionaries, under the direction and dictation of their lay brethren, without any of the prerogatives of a pastoral ministry. For this they will plead the necessity as well as the republicanism of the measure; for we have seen that the republicanism of reformers means anything which suits their convenience. Whether such a course be probable or not, it is certain that under the constitution it may be adopted, and it is strange that so important a matter should have been left so entirely discretionary with the annual conferences.

Another power vested by the constitution in the annual conferences, is the providing of means and adopting measures to raise the salaries of the travelling preachers. There is no method appointed or enjoined by the constitution or the discipline to effect this object; and as no measure can be adopted by annual conferences without the consent of a majority of the lay members, the preachers must be very accommodating in relation to their privileges, or their lay masters will "veto" the money bills, and leave them without the assistance of "the committee of ways and means."

We have no hesitation in asserting that an efficient itinerant ministry cannot be sustained upon these principles. That ministers may be found who will submit to place their dearest interests, their health and family comforts, at the disposal of a single individual, is not now matter of conjecture, because it has been done in our Church ever since its organization. But then this individual has been, and must continue to be appointed *by*, and responsible *to*, those whose destinies he thus controls. That there will be found ministers of any value who will submit to the same absolute authority, when the authority is conferred by laymen who are not subject to the authority they confer, remains to be ascertained by the experiment which the convention has instituted. For ourselves we anticipate the result with confidence. Were there no other errors in the new plan but that which relates to the appointing power, we should consider it

fatal to the whole scheme of reform, so far as that scheme contemplates an efficient itinerant ministry.

We have all along assumed the position, that the reformers intended to provide for the perpetuation of an itinerant ministry ; and we are authorized to do so, not only from their general professions, but from the restriction imposed upon the General Conference by the seventh section of the tenth article of their constitution, which says, " No rule shall be passed to abolish an efficient itinerant ministry, or to authorize the annual conferences to station their ministers and preachers longer than three years successively in the same circuit, and two years successively in the same station." That such a mode of ministerial operation cannot be carried on successfully without an absolute authority somewhere to appoint the preachers their circuits and stations, will be obvious to all who reflect maturely on the subject ; and as it requires no ordinary degree of disinterestedness and devotion to induce a minister to submit to the privations and hardships which such a scheme will necessarily impose, the submission cannot be expected of him, unless the authority to which he commits all his temporal interests is delegated by himself, and the person who holds it is made responsible to him for the proper exercise of the prerogative. In the Methodist Episcopal Church the itinerant preachers have this protection ; but we have shown that in the new scheme the appointing power is held or delegated jointly with the laity and local preachers, and whoever may exercise the prerogative is responsible, not to the travelling preachers exclusively, but to an annual conference, composed in part of local preachers and laymen, over whom this tremendous power, affecting indirectly " life, liberty, and all the pursuits of happiness," cannot be exerted. To sustain an itinerant plan of ministration upon such a basis, is as hopeless as it is absurd.

We will proceed to examine another provision of the new plan, in reference to the perpetuation of an itinerant ministry ; and we are greatly mistaken if we shall not be able to show, not only that it is fatal to any scheme of extensive itinerant operation, but also to the union of the Methodist Protestant Church, under any modification of their constitution and discipline which shall preserve this extraordinary provision.

We allude to the manner in which the Church property is to be held under the constitution of the new Church.

In the Methodist Episcopal Church, our meeting-houses are considered as the property of the whole Church ; and hence the land on which they are erected, is deeded to trustees "*in trust, that they shall erect and build, or cause to be erected and built thereon, a house or place of worship, for the use of the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America, according to the Rules and Discipline,*" &c.; "*and in further trust and confidence, that they shall at all times, forever here-*

*after, permit such ministers and preachers, belonging to the said Church, as shall from time to time be duly authorized by the General Conferences of the ministers and preachers of the said Methodist Episcopal Church, or by the annual conferences authorized by the said General Conference to preach and expound God's holy word therein," &c.*

It will be perceived, that while the use of our meeting-houses is secured to the members of the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States of America as places of public worship, the right to occupy the pulpit for the purpose of "expounding God's holy word therein," is secured to our travelling preachers. The trustees cannot, without violating their trust, transfer, by sale or otherwise, these places of worship to the members of any other Christian denomination, or exclude the travelling preachers from the pulpits.

This arrangement is every way just and equitable; for our places of worship are generally, if not always, erected by contributions collected, not only from the members of the Church who reside in the vicinity, but from those who live in distant neighbourhoods, as every member of the Church, however remote, has a common interest in the building, and the purpose for which it is erected. Many who are not members of the Church, contribute liberally to these objects; but whoever contributes, does so with a specific object—namely, to erect a Methodist meeting-house; and therefore it would be unjust to allow either the trustees or the male members of the Church, who happen to occupy any one of these houses, to divert these contributions to any other purpose than that for which they were originally designed. We may also observe, that in most instances these houses are built partly through the personal exertions of the preachers on the circuit, and these exertions are made with the understanding that they and their successors shall be secured in the right to occupy the pulpits when they have opportunity: they cannot, then, be deprived of this privilege without downright injustice. Our meeting-houses being thus secured, according to the intentions of the contributors, to the whole Methodist connexion, cannot be alienated by those who ordinarily worship in them; and hence no change of religious opinions among these members can affect the security of our places of worship, and the travelling preacher's right to the pulpit cannot be denied or withheld, although the trustees, and a majority of the members of the Church who attend worship in any particular house, should become Unitarians, or adopt any other religious belief. The house would remain the property of the connexion at large, and the preacher could not be refused admission to the pulpit. He would thus have the means of comforting and strengthening those who remained steadfast. The minority who adhered to the original conditions of occupancy, could not be driven out by those whose opinions had changed, and who would, therefore, be desirous to call a

minister whose doctrines accorded with their own views or opinions. It is therefore obvious that this part of our economy is as it should be. To alter it, would be a long step towards congregational government.

It will be remembered, however, that this part of our economy was among the first that was assailed by the advocates of reform. In the first volume of the "Mutual Rights," it was not only complained of, but misrepresented even to caricature. We were told that "all our Church property belonged to the bishops," although no deed for Church property in the United States contained the name of either of the bishops. But it was alleged the houses belonged to the bishops, because the bishops appointed the preachers, and the preachers had a right to the pulpits. And we were called upon to look to our rights, and to wrest this dangerous prerogative from the travelling preachers. We could not perceive, however, that any danger could arise from securing to our pastors the use of our pulpits, or that we could possibly perpetuate our plan of a general itinerancy, if those to whom the pastoral care of the Churches was committed could be excluded from our meeting-houses by the caprice of the trustees, aided by a few disaffected members, who, from change of opinions, either in matters of faith or Church government, might desire to change their ministers. We therefore obstinately refused to be *reformed* in this matter; and upon a careful examination of what has been done by the reformers themselves, we shall find no cause to regret our pertinacious adherence to our long-tried regulations in regard to this important subject.

In the economy of the new Church, it is provided by the fourth article of the constitution, that "*An associated Church or society shall be composed of any number of members residing sufficiently near each other to assemble statedly for public worship, and to transact its temporal business.*" "*And every Church or society shall have power, by the concurrence of two-thirds of its qualified male members, present at any meeting called for the purpose, to purchase, build, lease, sell, rent, or otherwise obtain or dispose of property for the mutual benefit of the Church.*" And in the Discipline, under the head of "General Duties of Trustees," it is provided that "*it shall be the duty of the trustees to hold the property of INDIVIDUAL CHURCHES in trust, for the use and benefit of the members thereof;*" and, moreover, that "*the trustees shall have power, when authorized by two-thirds of the male members, over the age of twenty-one years, assembled at a regular meeting for the purpose, to purchase, build, repair, lease, sell, rent, mortgage, or otherwise procure or dispose of property, and on no other conditions whatever.*"

It requires very little sagacity to perceive that the above provisions of the new Church tend necessarily to a congregational plan of government, and ultimately to strife, litigation, and division in the *individual* Churches

themselves. If any individual Church should at any time be dissatisfied with the preacher sent to them by the conference, they may call and settle one either temporarily or permanently, for the circuit preacher has no legal right to occupy the pulpit. It is accorded to him of mere courtesy, and he may be legally ejected at any time by the vote of two-thirds of the male members, over the age of twenty-one years, this being a sufficient warrant to the trustees, not only to sell or rent the property, but to *otherwise dispose of it*.

If two-thirds of the male members of any individual "associated Church" change their religious opinions, they may, in spite of the established creed of the other Churches of the association, call and settle a minister whose doctrines accord with their newly-adopted opinions. And thus one-third of the male members over twenty-one years of age, with all who happen to be under the legal age, and the whole of the females, who generally constitute a majority of every Church, may be deprived of the benefit of a house of worship, which they had contributed to build, and have the mortification to see it appropriated to the use of a denomination with whom they cannot conscientiously hold religious communion. Nor is this all. The brethren in other districts, and also those of other denominations who contributed to the purchase of the property, or the erection of the house, will see their best and most charitable intentions frustrated, and their pecuniary contributions diverted to a purpose which they may sincerely believe hostile to the interest of Christ's kingdom. Those who, approving the religious tenets of the Methodist Protestants, have contributed to their encouragement, may find themselves unwittingly aiding the propagation of doctrines which they deem subversive to the fundamental principles of Christian theology, and consequently the best interests of man.

But, at least, that which *has* happened before may happen again; and it is a matter of historical record, that even the great and well-deserved influence of Mr. Wesley in his societies could not prevent the trustees of certain churches, built chiefly by his own exertions, from calling and settling ministers, independent of his authority; and in one instance, if not more, they succeeded in seducing a favourite and most promising preacher from his allegiance and duty, and ejected Mr. Wesley himself and all the preachers of his connexion from their pulpit. It was thus that the venerable founder of Methodism was compelled to alter his original plan with regard to the settlement of meeting-houses erected by those in connexion with him. He was taught by experience that it would be impossible to perpetuate an itinerant ministry if the houses erected by their exertions could be alienated from the original purpose for which they were designed, by a few trustees, whose wealth gave them an influence which ought to be accorded to piety alone; or, while a popular, insinua-

ting preacher, availing himself of the appointment of some preacher of less pretensions, or less showy abilities, could make a party, sow the seeds of discord, and reap, as the reward of his treason, a handsome settlement for life.

Under the present regulations of the new Church, any "individual associated Church" who may be displeased with the preacher sent to them by the conference, may call their favourite preacher and employ him for such term as may be agreed upon, and the travelling preacher may betake himself to the woods. And as the richer Churches alone will be likely to do so, he may enjoy the blessedness of preaching to the poor only—the rich will consider it their privilege to take care of themselves.\*

There is, however, one redeeming advantage in the arrangement we have been considering. The individual Churches, as they grow weary of "reform," may return to their first love. They may find it their duty to do their first works over again, and return to the bosom of the Church from which they have so causelessly separated. Their meeting-houses may then aid in the propagation of the gospel through an efficient itinerant ministry—a purpose for which they were no doubt erected, but a purpose which they are certainly not destined to fulfil in their present relation.

Those who recollect the quarter from which the attack came will have seen, before now, the reason why our plan of settling Church property did not please the assailant. He *had been* a popular travelling preacher, but having bettered his temporal prospects by marriage, he sat down to cultivate his rich domains *with his own slaves*, and to rail at the *tyranny* of Methodist bishops, whose voluntary servitude was less tolerable than that of this preacher's slaves. But the fashion of this world passeth away. The farm and the slaves could no longer be retained, and a good ministerial settlement was a resource which may be reasonably supposed to have presented itself in a very seducing aspect. Under the existing economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, however, this could not be compassed. The economy was, therefore, to be changed, and our preacher, heretofore a zealous opponent of democracy *in civil politics*, became the apostle of democracy in Church government. What a glorious scramble we should have had for churches and settlements had we consented to be reformed! The "individual associated Churches" who were rich enough to settle a minister, might have attracted the light of the bright constellation which, we are told, embodied all the talents of the Church. How justly are we now reproached with being too ignorant to understand or appreciate the wonderful reformation proposed to us, and as possessing just dogged obstinacy and common sense enough to believe that a system

\* This *was* prediction; it *is now* history.

which had worked well for a century could not be safely subverted, and quietly to determine to let *well enough* alone.

We think it will have been made apparent that the settlement of our houses of worship upon "individual associated Churches" is incompatible with a plan of general itinerant ministration. And as our whole history shows this to have been, in the order of Providence, our peculiar calling, we should have been manifestly unfaithful to the trust assigned us by the great Head of the Church had we compromised this great missionary plan of operation by alienating the houses devoted to this purpose, or placing them in the hands of men whose local views and sectional feelings, or whose pride or prejudices might lead them to prefer a settled ministry.

From what has been said, it will be apparent to every impartial reader, that if the reformers of Methodism really designed to institute and perpetuate an efficient itinerant system of ministerial operation, they have been very unfortunate in the leading provisions of their system. The appointing power is so disposed of as to be at the same time less efficient in its exercise and more oppressive to its subjects; and the Church property is held by so precarious a tenure that a few men in each "individual associate Church" may alienate it from the confederation, and deprive the travelling ministers of both the use of the pulpits and the pastoral oversight of the flocks. We shall proceed to examine some other provisions of the new plan, with reference to their adaptation to the distinguishing feature of Methodism—namely, itinerancy.

We keep this part of our ecclesiastical economy constantly in view, because it is essential to us as a religious community, and because we have from the beginning of this controversy believed and alleged that the proposed reform would greatly impair, if not wholly destroy it. We were assured, however, by our reforming friends, that no such design was meditated. The itinerant system, they said, was as deeply rooted in their affections as in ours; and as we were not at liberty to attribute to them any covert design or want of sincerity, we could only suppose that the necessary tendency of the measures proposed was not perceived by those who urged them upon us. They have now had an opportunity to make a new system, untrammelled by our interference; and as they have instituted an itinerant system and declared it unalterable by any council of the Church, except a general convention, we must suppose, not only that they are sincere in their professions of regard to this peculiarity of Methodist economy, but that the system they have devised for its perpetuation is the same which would have been provided for us had they been permitted to reform us after their own fashion. If, then, the defects in their plan are fatal to an itinerant system of ministerial labour and pastoral oversight, no minor amendments of our economy would have made an adequate compensation for the destruction of that which is essential to our existence.

Let us now examine the provisions of the new plan in regard to class-meeting, and inquire how far this institution is made by reformers to sustain the itinerant preachers in the discharge of their pastoral duties.

It will be recollected, that at a very early period in the history of this controversy some strictures on class-meeting were published in the "Wesleyan Repository," over an anonymous signature. The papers were known to be written by Mr. Snethen, who has claimed to be the originator of the "reform" movement, and who, for a long time, was considered its leader. It was contended by the writer that the Methodist Episcopal Church had imposed an unscriptural condition of membership upon her members, by requiring them to meet in class. It was, nevertheless, admitted that this institution was of essential benefit to the membership, and greatly promoted their growth in grace. The writer went so far as to admit that the neglect of class-meeting generally marked a declension of piety; but still he contended that the Church had no authority to enjoin it, because it was nowhere expressly authorized in the Scriptures.

On the other hand, it was contended that it was the duty of every individual Christian to do whatever would promote his spiritual welfare, because this was enjoined by the Scriptures; and if in the religious community to which he voluntarily belonged, any particular institution was, by general consent and general experience, acknowledged to have this effect, he was bound by every religious obligation to attend to it. Secondly, it was alleged that every member of the Church had joined it with a perfect knowledge of this requirement, and had, therefore, consented to the obligation and pledged himself to its fulfilment. To neglect his class would therefore be a violation of his contract, and subject him very justly to expulsion.

But the right to make class-meeting a term or condition of membership with us, does not rest exclusively upon its acknowledged usefulness in quickening the zeal and prompting the piety of our members; nor upon the voluntary obligation which every individual member assumed by joining the Church. The right was predicated of the relation which necessarily subsists between the members of a Church and their pastors. If it be the duty of the pastor to "feed the flock of Christ, taking the oversight thereof"—to watch over their souls as he who must give an account to God—it can be no less the duty of the members to place themselves under such circumstances as may enable the pastor to discharge these duties. In an itinerant system this cannot be done by any other plan than class-meetings; or, at least, no other plan has yet been proposed, or devised, which meets the necessity: the travelling preacher cannot take care of his flock without the intervention of some subordinate oversight, through which he is made acquainted with the individual state of the members; and with us this oversight is exercised by the class-



leader, a person selected and appointed by the preacher, and responsible to him for the faithful discharge of his duty.

It will be easily seen why this institution is not necessary, or, at least, not essentially so, to those who are under the care of a settled resident minister. Their pastor being acquainted with them individually, and residing among them, can make himself acquainted with their religious state, and adapt his advice to their necessities, and, if necessary, protect the communion from the intrusion of improper communicants, and the cause of religion from the reproach which always follows a desecration of her sacraments. But the itinerant minister, hurrying with rapidity from appointment to appointment, with only time to preach, meet the class, and visit the sick, could know little of the life and conversation of the communicants, or their individual growth or decay in religious knowledge and experience, and must be dependant upon his helper, the faithful class-leader, for information on these subjects, so essential to the proper discharge of his duty.

Having heretofore treated of this matter very fully,\* we only glance at it now, in order to show the bearing which the new plan will necessarily have upon the itinerant operations of the Methodist Protestant Church.

The strong sensation which was produced in the Methodist community by Mr. Snethen's attack upon class-meeting, and the manifest injury it did to the cause of reform, induced him to desist; and though some of his adherents still maintained his views, yet most of them became loud in their praise of this institution, and professed the utmost zeal for its perpetuation. They repelled, as an injurious slander, the imputation of hostility to this part of our economy; and we have no reason to doubt, that most of those who enlisted under the banners of reform believed, that after they had effected all the contemplated changes in the economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church, class-meetings would remain in all their purity and obligation. We believed, however, at the time, that this was not the design of their leaders, and the event has now put the question beyond all doubt. They have not abolished class-meetings; but they have so changed their character as to render them of little value to the Church, if they do not, as we sincerely apprehend, become the sources of great disquietude and dissension. Our reasons for this opinion we shall proceed to show:—

In the first place, they have taken the appointment of class-leaders from the pastor of the Church, and made them elective, annually, by the members of the class.

In our review of the conventional articles, we showed, at some length, the evils which would necessarily grow out of a periodical election of

\* See "Review of the Conventional Articles of Association," in a preceding part of this volume.

class-leaders, and beg leave to refer the reader to that review for what it would be useless to repeat at this time. But it will be easily perceived, that under the new plan the class-leader is not the agent of the preacher, is not responsible to him for the faithful performance of his duties, or for any performance of them at all. He may neglect to meet his class as often as he pleases, and if he can secure a majority of votes he will retain his commission, although this majority may be made up of the junior part of the members, who, it will not be pretended, are ordinarily best qualified to judge of the proper qualifications for a leader, whose office it is to instruct them in the doctrines and duties of Christianity. Indeed, it is not among the least evils of this arrangement, that it supposes all who enter upon a religious course of life to be immediately possessed of the knowledge and experience which will enable them discreetly and safely to exercise the right of choosing their instructors. The supposition is at war with all experience and observation. Professors do not come into the Church like the fabulous Minerva from the head of Jupiter, full-grown at their birth. They know at first but little of the devices of Satan, and perhaps less of the deep depravity and corruption of their own hearts. They are found to be much more impelled by the impulse of feeling, than led by the sober exercise of judgment; and hence, with the young members, zeal and passionate declamation, a good voice, and a little spice of the ranter, will be irresistible characteristics in the qualifications of a class-leader; and, unfortunately for the new scheme, votes are to be *counted*, not *weighed*.

In reference to the auxiliary relation of the class-leader to the pastor, the new plan annihilates it entirely. The class-leader is no way responsible to the pastor; and if he entertains any ill-feeling toward him, he may decline any communication whatever. Or if the leader should diffuse among his class doctrines which the pastor believes to be inimical to their spiritual improvement, or should he be found not to possess the requisite qualifications for his station, the pastor may see the fruits of his labour perishing for want of proper culture; yet he has no remedy, although the souls committed to him by the Great Head of the Church are to be required at his hands.

But this is not all. Class-meeting in the new scheme is *not made a condition of membership*. The members of the Methodist Protestant Church are not bound to meet in class in order to retain their relation to the Church. Such an obligation is nowhere imposed by the Discipline, and is strictly prohibited by the constitution, and by what are called the elementary principles upon which the constitution is based.

It is true that it is made the duty of a class-leader to meet his class once a week; but it is nowhere made the duty of the class to meet him. He must keep a register of his class, and mark the absentees: but for

what purpose does not appear; for the absentees incur neither penalty nor punishment by neglecting or refusing to meet. And, indeed, the class-leader himself may neglect all his official duties without losing either his membership or his office. His membership cannot be forfeited but by immorality, or the propagation of unscriptural doctrines; and for his office, he is dependant upon the votes of his class exclusively. Nor can the General Conference mend this defect, as it is a part of the constitution itself, which cannot be altered but by a General Convention.

The constitution declares, by the second article, that "there is only one condition required of those who apply for membership in an Associated Methodist Church, viz.: a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved by grace, through faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; with an avowed determination to walk in all the commandments of God blameless. But those who may continue therein, must give evidence of this desire and determination, *by conforming to such rules of moral discipline as the word of God requires.*" A member, therefore, does not forfeit his membership by neglecting to meet in class, as it will not be pretended that it is among the "moral rules of discipline which the *word of God* requires." If, indeed, a member of the new Church made upon his admission any engagement or covenant to attend class-meeting, it might be argued that a neglect or refusal to fulfil his promises would be an immorality, and therefore subject him to expulsion. But he makes no such stipulation, either positively or tacitly; because no such requirement is found in the Discipline of the Church.

Indeed, as the constitution and the "Elementary Principles" both forbid any such requirement, the attending class-meeting could not be made a condition of membership. The fifth article of the "Elementary Principles" asserts, that "Church trials should be conducted on gospel principles only; and no minister or member should be excommunicated except for immorality, the propagation of unchristian doctrines, or for the neglect of duties *enjoined by the word of God.*" And in the tenth article, fourth section, of the constitution, it is provided, that "no rule, except it be founded on the Holy Scriptures, shall be passed, authorizing the expulsion of any minister, preacher, or member;" and this also is one of the articles which the General Conference cannot alter.

We have shown that, under the new plan, class-meetings are provided for those who like them; but there is not in the Discipline any rule which makes it obligatory upon the members of the Methodist Protestant Church to attend class-meeting; and if any rule of Discipline could, by any possible inference, be made to imply such obligation, the constitution, and even the elementary principles on which it is based, forbid such an interpretation.

Under such a discipline, we would ask how an itinerant preacher is to

oversee his flock? An individual oversight is wholly impracticable, as he has neither time nor opportunity for the work. Class-meeting affords him no opportunity for personal inquiry, as many of the members may neglect or refuse to meet him there; and as the class-leader cannot, and ought not, to be required to make domiciliary visits for pastoral purposes, to the utter neglect of his temporal affairs, the preacher has no means of becoming acquainted with the life and conversation of those whose names are found upon the Church record, and to preserve the holy communion or the love-feasts from the intrusion of those who walk unworthy of the Christian profession. We have not thought ourselves at liberty to advert to the necessity of class-meetings in our economy, as an important part of our financial arrangements;—the disinterested reform preachers might spurn the mercenary argument. To us, we admit the institution to be necessary on this account, as we are yet worldly-minded enough to think the poverty and privations of a minister are his misfortunes, and no part of his religion. But if we confine ourselves to the spiritual advantages of class-meeting, we might be permitted to ask, What would have become of the Methodist Episcopal Church, had she consented to be reformed in this matter after the fashion of the new Church? How speedily would the dissolution of our whole superstructure have followed an innovation which would have placed the membership beyond the reach of pastoral oversight, and exposed our altars to desecration and contempt,—which abolishes class-meeting as a condition of membership, although it is admitted by reformers themselves that it is an important “means of grace,” and that a neglect of it generally, if not always, marks a declension of piety! From such reform, good Lord deliver us.

We come now to the consideration of the provisions of the new Church for the trial of members accused of “propagating heretical opinions, of immorality, or neglect of duty.” The rules adopted by the Methodist Episcopal Church on this subject, have been some of the principal grounds of complaint with our adversaries. They have been denounced as both arbitrary and unjust, and, therefore, as fearfully jeopardizing the Christian and even the civil rights and privileges of the membership. It was therefore expected that they were fully prepared not only to alter but to amend these rules when, in forming a new government, they were left to their own discretion, with all the lights of experience to guide them. That they have altered the plan, is true; but that they have made it better, remains to be ascertained by experience. We have been very far from thinking our rules on the subject of Church trials unexceptionable, and we know that the whole system has been frequently brought into review by the General Conference of our Church with the best disposition in the world to improve it, but hitherto they have not been able to devise any other provisions which would not be liable to greater objections than those by

which we are now governed ; and we have looked in vain to the Discipline of the new Church for the emendations which, if they had been furnished, would be readily approved and gladly copied.

It will be fairly acknowledged, that the authority given to the pastors in our Church to select the committee of trial is liable to abuse, if the pastor be under the influence of improper feelings towards the accused ; but we know of no system of jurisprudence, civil or ecclesiastical, which is not liable to abuse by the officers appointed to execute it. On the other hand, the pastor is often subjected, by the exercise of this power, to the resentment of the delinquent and his friends, when he has discharged his duty with the utmost faithfulness and impartiality. It would, therefore, be desirable to relieve the pastor of a duty which, in its strict though impartial exercise, may awaken feelings in some portion of his flock which may hinder his usefulness as a minister. The prerogative cannot be very desirable to a minister which may make enemies but cannot make him friends, and in the exercise of which he must encounter and come into personal collision with the hostilities awakened by the just exercise of discipline, resisted by self-love, the most ungovernable and unyielding of all human passions. It would, therefore, be very desirable to our preachers to shift this responsibility to other shoulders, if it could be transferred with safety to the Church. To Methodist preachers such an exemption would be peculiarly desirable, as from their entire dependence for support upon the voluntary contributions of those to whom they minister, they are more liable to suffer than the pastors of other Churches from any offence which they may give in the administration of discipline. It is, then, from necessity, not choice, that our ministry continue to bear this burden. And we repeat the declaration—the General Conference have sought earnestly to alter this part of our economy, but have not hitherto been able to discover a plan which, while it offered a greater exemption from responsibility to the minister, did not, at the same time, open the door to evils of much greater magnitude. We shall presently proceed to inquire whether the Discipline of the new Church, in regard to the trial of delinquent members, has obviated the difficulties and remedied the imperfections of which they complained while yet in our communion. But it will be necessary first to consider more particularly the nature and propriety of the objections which have been urged against us on this subject. It is admitted that in our Church the pastor selects the committee to try a member against whom charges have been preferred, and that there is no express provision of Discipline which recognises the right of the accused to challenge any member of the committee, either peremptorily or for cause. It is believed, however, that no instance has occurred in which the minister has refused to change a committee-man when a proper and reasonable objection has been urged ; and, moreover, the General Conference have

explicitly declared that such a refusal would be considered a dereliction of duty, for which the pastor would be highly censurable. If the right to challenge has not been distinctly acknowledged, it is because it was found impossible so to restrain the exercise of the right as to secure the proper administration of discipline. In courts of criminal jurisprudence authority is vested in the sheriff to summon jurymen from any part of the county or district in which the court has competent jurisdiction. A neglect or refusal to obey such summons is punishable in a summary manner by the court with such pains and penalties as may enforce obedience; but it is obvious that no ecclesiastical officer or judiciary is, or ought to be, vested with such power, and, therefore, a like right of challenge in Church trials might be made to defeat all the righteous purposes of ecclesiastical discipline. Even in criminal courts the difficulty is often one of great magnitude; but then, if the criminal challenge one venire after another for years, he is still kept in confinement, and prevented from doing further injury to society. But a member of a Church would continue in communion, pending the proceedings, and the very notoriety of his offence would offer the greatest obstacle to the just exercise of discipline.

If the alleged offence has been publicly committed, it will, of course, be generally known and talked of. The particular circumstances of the case will be understood by all the members of the Church as well as others, and, of course, their opinions will have been formed and expressed before the trial is instituted, and the notorious offender has only to exercise his right of challenge for cause, and all who have formed an unfavourable opinion on his case must be dismissed. Meantime the minister has no power to compel the attendance of committee-men from a distance, nor any means of compensating them for their loss of time, or to defray the expenses incurred by them in the fulfilment of the duty required by the Church; and hence the very notoriety of the offence secures the offender from punishment, and subjects the communion of the Church to reproach and desecration.

"To retain on a committee," says the Rev. Mr. Hanson, "men whose personal hostility to the accused might divert their minds from the real merits of the case, and thereby prevent the due administration of justice, is what I believe no Methodist preacher would knowingly do; but to dismiss brethren, lest their love and respect for the character of the Church should lead them to condemn the schismatic and defamatory acts of her members, would be a strange proceeding indeed."

We cannot, perhaps, explain ourselves better, than by a quotation from the "Narrative and Defence" of the proceedings in Baltimore in certain Church trials, which were the subject of loud and universal complaint and denunciation among our adversaries. After the lapse of some years, it is gratifying to review opinions formed and expressed under circumstances

so well calculated to bias the judgment through the influence of the feelings, and to find nothing which maturer reflection would require us to alter. It is said in the Narrative and Defence, pages 86-88 :—

“The protests and objections so confidently made and so pertinaciously insisted on, against the committees appointed to try the cases severally of the local preachers and the lay members, chiefly rested on the want of conformity in the appointment and in the proceedings generally, to the practice which obtains in courts of criminal jurisprudence. We may therefore entertain the hope, that when these great reformers shall have remodelled the Church ‘after their fashion,’ we shall, among other promised blessings, enjoy all the glorious uncertainties of the law. We shall then substitute our little book of Discipline by massy folios of common law and statute law, with commentaries of learned length, and reports of ponderous magnitude. We shall have a goodly number of ecclesiastical lawyers, establish courts, appoint judges, with their attending clerks, and other officers, who will keep us to all the rules of special pleading and legal technicalities. We may then enjoy the inestimable privilege of occasionally defeating the ends of justice, by a technical objection to an indictment, and see persons take their places in our class-meetings and at the communion, whom everybody knows to be guilty of the worst offences, but who have eluded a fair trial by the subtilty of counsel. What a wonderful reformation we have in prospect, and how ardently it ought to be desired by all good Methodists!

“We have heretofore considered our Church judicatories as merely moral tribunals, in which a few plain, pious men were deemed capable of deciding, whether an accused brother had violated his religious or social obligations, as ascertained and pointed out by the Bible and our Discipline; how one, found to have so offended, could be reclaimed from the error of his ways—the effects of evil example prevented, and the reproach rolled away from the Church of Christ. We had never thought that there was any great difficulty in such an investigation; or that the rules by which such an inquiry was to be conducted, could be, in their nature, very obscure or complicated. The Methodists had, therefore, been led to think that men of plain common sense, with the necessary piety and integrity, were fully competent to judge in such matters, both of the *law* and the *fact*. But it seems that both we and our fathers have walked in great darkness. In vain we allege, that we have hitherto lived happy under these regulations. This, we are told, was attributable to our ignorance. We did not know and justly estimate our privileges. All these things are now to be *reformed*!

“The right to challenge jurors, it is alleged, is acknowledged in all civilized and Christian countries. We will not cavil at this sweeping declaration, although it might, perhaps, be shown that there are civilized and

Christian countries where the trial by jury does not exist at all. We admit, however, that all civilized and Christian countries ought to adopt it as a civil institution of inestimable value; but it does not follow that precisely the same regulation ought to be, or even can be, adopted in Church government, accompanied with the right to challenge jurors; and we may safely assert, that such a right, as exercised in our courts of law, does not obtain in any Church judicatory of which we ever heard. In the Protestant Episcopal Church, we believe that persons deemed unworthy are forbidden the communion at the will of the pastor alone. In the Presbyterian Church, the trial of members accused of improper conduct, takes place before the 'session,' composed of the minister and the ruling elders, all holding their office for life, or during good behaviour; and deputations from the 'sessions' constitute all the superior judicatories who exercise appellate jurisdiction in the Church. In the Baptist and Congregational Churches, trials for violation of discipline take place before the whole Church, and we believe the accused does not possess the privilege to except against any member's right to sit on his case. Surely it cannot be without good reason that the privilege of challenge, either peremptorily or for cause, accorded to persons indicted for offences against the laws of civil society, are not recognised in any Church judicatory whatever. Why it has not been, and cannot be provided for by any such explicit regulation is, indeed, very obvious. It would require that there should exist somewhere in the Church, an authority to compel the service of jurors, and the attendance of witnesses,\* and to call them from a great distance if occasion should require. But it is obvious that no Church can clothe any of its officers with such powers. We readily admit, that in selecting committees, our preachers ought to set aside any man who is known to entertain, or to have expressed, any personal hostility to the accused member. We know of no instance where they have refused to do so; and were they to refuse, the quarterly-meeting conference, upon an appeal, would not fail to redress the injury."

It has been alleged, however, that the quarterly-meeting conferences to which the injured member has a right to appeal, is chiefly composed of class-leaders, who are appointed by the preacher, and may be removed by him at pleasure. To this we may reply, that it could seldom if ever happen, that *the* preacher under whose administration the appeal is made, had appointed any considerable proportion of the class-leaders in a quarterly-meeting conference, although they all would, at some time or other, have

\* "During the trials we have been giving an account of, the tribunals, so far from having the power to compel the attendance of witnesses, appeared to have no authority to compel answers to interrogatories put to the witnesses who were present. Some of the officers and private members of the Union Society positively refused to say whether the persons under trial were members of that society or not."—*Narrative and Defence.*



been appointed by a preacher. And, secondly, that although a preacher may remove *improper* leaders, yet, for the exercise of his discretion in this matter, he is responsible to the annual conference, and would be subjected to censure if he were to remove useful leaders to effect any purpose of his own. Add to this, that his daily bread depends upon the good opinion of his flock; and it will be easily seen that the removal of leaders for the purpose of influencing the decision of a quarterly conference, would be a measure of such hardihood, as a preacher in his right senses would hardly venture to adopt.

The authority which, in this respect, is committed to a preacher, is like that which is vested in the commander of an army. It is necessary that the commander should be intrusted with power, which may be abused to the great damage of those under his command; but his country holds him amenable for the judicious exercise of his power, and the abuse of it will subject him to censure and punishment under the decision of a court martial. So, if a preacher abuse his trust, to the injury of the Church, complaint may be lodged against him to the annual conference, to whom he is responsible for his official as well as moral conduct. If to this it be answered, that the annual conference is composed entirely of ministers, and would, therefore, justify one of their own members, right or wrong, we have only to say that he who has the misfortune to belong to a Church whose whole ministry are thus corrupt, will scarcely deem expulsion an injury or a misfortune. If he be a good man he will not wait to be disowned by such a ministry—he will hasten to disown them.

After all, however, we are free to confess, that this part of our economy is founded, like most other parts of it, in the mutual confidence of ministers and members. It is supposed that a minister of the gospel will feel and act in accordance with his sacred calling; that he will love the souls whom Christ has purchased with his own blood too well to purposely turn them out of the way, or to willingly deprive them of Christian fellowship and communion, unless they have rendered themselves utterly unworthy of such privileges. If he be the representative of the good Shepherd he will love the sheep, and will feed them, and delight to lead them into fruitful pastures; but if he be a wolf in sheep's clothing he may do mischief to the flock—nor do we know how to guard effectually against such a contingency. To deprive the pastors of the Church of all power which may be abused, would leave them destitute of the power to protect the sanctuary of the Lord.

But let us see what steps the new Church, which was to be a paragon of excellence, has done in this matter:—

In the third section of the fourteenth article of the constitution, it is provided that “No member shall be expelled or deprived of Church privileges, without an impartial trial before a committee of three or more lay

members, or *before the society of which he is a member, as the accused may require.*" This is one of the constitutional articles which the General Conference of the Methodist Protestant Church cannot alter; and we undertake to show that it renders the expulsion of the worst criminals, under certain circumstances, impossible.

Whether by the society be meant the class, or the whole associate Church, the effect will be the same. Some offences are of so gross and obscene a character as to render it highly indecorous to bring them before females of any age, much more young females. No female, of the least delicacy, would consent to hear the evidence in such cases, especially in the presence of men; and yet the accused might legally object to be tried unless they attended. It is well known that females constitute a large majority of most country classes and societies, where the male and female members always meet together. If, then, in any trial of an accused member, the females absent themselves, the assembly could not be called the class, or society, and therefore would not be competent to try the case. The delinquent would therefore elude a trial altogether, for he could not be legally brought before a committee, because the constitution gives him the option of being tried by a committee, or before the society.

Again: it will happen, as it has often happened, that a class or society will consist of only five or six members, and of these each individual may belong to the same family, or may be allied by consanguinity or by marriage. Any accusation brought against a member of this society must, if the accused require it, be tried by his own relatives. Will any man say that, under such circumstances, the Church has a fair chance for a verdict? Will the wife and the children disgrace themselves by expelling the husband and the father from the Church? Yet such is the amendment which radicalism would have made in our discipline.

But if a member, accused of any offence, shall not elect to be tried by the whole society, then the Discipline provides that "*the accused shall nominate* two persons in full membership and good standing;" the class of which he or she is a member shall nominate two more members, in like good standing; and the four persons thus chosen shall appoint a fifth, which five persons shall constitute a competent *court* of trial. But should the accused neglect or refuse to nominate as above provided, when timely notice shall have been given, the presiding minister shall nominate two members of the committee on behalf of the accused; provided, however, that the accused shall have the right to challenge any person chosen as a committee-man by the class, by assigning satisfactory reasons for so doing, of which the class shall judge; and provided, also, that the presiding officer shall have the right to challenge the choice of the accused, by showing just cause, of which the class shall judge." If the committee find the person guilty, they must also adjudge the penalty.

Thus it will be seen, that the *trial* of a Church member is turned into an *arbitration*, and the accused has the privilege of selecting two persons whom he has been able to bias, or whom he knows to be in his favour, and these two friends have a fair chance of procuring a third member of the committee whose views they have previously ascertained, which three persons will constitute a majority of the committee. If, with all these advantages, the accused, whatever his case may be, suffers himself to be convicted, he will be a fitter subject for a lunatic asylum than for the exercise of Church discipline.

Let it be recollected that, however unjust the decision of the arbitrators may be, the Church has no appeal. The preacher has no authority to carry the case before the quarterly-meeting conference, either for the purpose of procuring a new trial or for final adjudication. Even if the committee should find the accused guilty of the grossest violation of the laws of God and man, they may *name* the slightest penalty, such as a rebuke from the preacher, and there is no redress,—the criminal will still be entitled to all the privileges of the Church which he has grieved and disgraced. We do not mean that the discipline professedly tolerates immorality, but that the power of *naming the penalty*, which is given to the committee without reserve, limitation, or control, gives the authority to assign the most trivial and inadequate punishment to the greatest violations of moral and religious obligation; because, however contrary their decision may be to the provisions of the discipline of the Church, it is final. No superior judicatory can annul the award, for it cannot be legally brought before any other.

We have now given a fair view of the constitution and discipline of the new Church, in reference to the trial of accused members; and, of course, of what the framers of it intended to do for us, if we had consented to be *reformed*: and we cheerfully submit the question to every impartial reader—Ought we to have consented to be reformed after “this fashion?”

In the new code, the general and annual conferences are styled “legislative assemblies,” and under the constitution as it now is, may exercise powers which we, who have been represented as the passive slaves of our itinerant preachers, should be very unwilling to delegate to either ministers or laymen.

The “elementary principles” contain the following declaration:—“The Church has a right to form and enforce such rules and regulations only as are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and may be necessary, or have a tendency to carry into effect the great system of practical Christianity.” “Whatever power may be necessary to the formation of rules and regulations, is inherent in the ministers and members of the Church; but so much of that power may be delegated, from time to time, upon a plan of representation as they may judge necessary and proper.”

“It is obligatory on ministers of the gospel, to be faithful in the discharge of their pastoral and ministerial duties ; and it is also obligatory on the members, to esteem ministers highly for their works’ sake, *and to render them a righteous compensation for their labours.*”

It will be perceived from the above extracts, that while the Church is prohibited from passing any rules and regulations which are not in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, it is at the same time declared to be the right of the ministry, and, of course, in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, to claim a *righteous compensation* for their labours ; and therefore the Church has a right to pass such rules and regulations as may be necessary to enforce this claim. Accordingly, we find that the General Conference has power “to fix the compensation and duties of the itinerant ministers and preachers, and the allowance for their wives, widows, and children ; and also the compensation and duties of the book agent, editor, &c., &c., and to devise ways and means for raising funds.” And the annual conferences have power “to make such rules and regulations as may be necessary to defray the expenses of the itinerant ministers, preachers, and their families ; to raise the amount of their salaries, as fixed by the convention, and for all other purposes connected with the organization and continuance of said conferences.” From all which it follows, that the “legislative assemblies” have power to levy and collect taxes for the compensation of the ministers and preachers, and for all the other purposes in the above enumeration ! and that these taxes may be either a poll or property tax, or both, if the “legislative assemblies” of the Church judge it expedient. That this inference is not drawn from any forced construction of the provisions of the constitution and discipline we are examining, but that it is fairly and legitimately made out, will be admitted by any impartial reader who will carefully examine the premises.

It is stated explicitly, that the Church has a right to make and *enforce* upon her members any rules and regulations which are in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, and none other. So far, very well. But it is further declared, that the members are bound, (of course, by the Holy Scriptures,) to render the ministers a righteous compensation for their labours ; and, moreover, that to secure this compensation, as ascertained by the General Conference, the annual conference shall have power to make *such rules and regulations as may be necessary* ; and, therefore, if necessary, they may raise the requisite funds by taxation, and enforce the collection under the penalty of expulsion from Church membership.

Let it be remembered, that the constitution before us recognises these Church councils as “legislative assemblies.” They have, therefore, a right to make laws, and laws are nugatory and useless unless some penalty is annexed to the violation of them. But the only penalty which

a Church can enforce or exact in this country, is Church censure or expulsion. It follows, therefore, that as the powers vested in the Church to *raise the preachers' salaries*, by such means as the legislative assemblies may deem necessary, is "in accordance with Scripture," the Church has a right to expel from her communion any member who may refuse to pay his assessment for the "righteous compensation" of the preacher.

The members of the Methodist Protestant Church have the consolation of having granted these constitutional powers to their legislative assemblies, through their own representatives, if, indeed, the lay delegates voted for the granting of these powers, for the majority of the convention consisted of ministers. Yet I very much doubt whether they will be found to submit very patiently, when the powers so liberally granted come to be exercised. They were promised a cheap ministry; and, perhaps, the false statements which from the beginning of the controversy were made in reference to the "salaries" of our bishops and presiding elders, made more converts to reform than all the *arguments* of reformers. They will now find they have made a bad exchange, in a pecuniary point of view at least; and however "reform" may have subdued their feelings, they will nevertheless be often compelled "to feel in their pockets."

As for us Episcopal Methodists, we have never admitted even the idea of "compensating our ministers for their labour." We have considered it our duty to afford them support—to furnish them and their families food and raiment; but "compensation" is a term entirely new to us in application to our preachers, and like the other innovations which have been dignified by the name of reform, we see no good reason for adopting it. To compensate them for their labour, would, we apprehend, be infinitely beyond our means; and indeed we should be greatly at a loss how to estimate their services. Compensation would imply not only payment for actual labour, but for the sacrifices necessarily imposed by the service required of them. We know of no rule in arithmetic by which these sacrifices could be estimated, and if the labours are to be valued by the benefits we have derived from them, payment is the most hopeless idea of which we can conceive.

Hitherto, however, we have not been required by our ministers to enter into any pecuniary stipulations with them, even for support, much less for "compensation." They have never assumed to be legislators, and therefore have not arrogated the dignity or prerogatives of "legislative assemblies." On the contrary, the last General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church (1828) expressly disavowed all legislative authority over the Church. They only claim, as a Church council, composed of the pastors of the flock of Christ, the right to execute the laws which the great Head of the Church has promulgated, and to adopt such prudential rules as may be necessary for that purpose. They have not found in

the code of the Christian Lawgiver, any law which requires the lay members of the Church to enter into a stipulation with their pastors and ministers, to allow them a "compensation for their labours," and therefore they have imposed none. They find, indeed, what is equally obvious to us, "that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel;" and that, therefore, the members of the Church are under a moral obligation to contribute of their worldly substance to the support of those who devote themselves wholly to the ministry; but it is like the moral obligation to relieve the necessities of the poor, to visit the sick, &c.,—the contribution, whether of money or time, must be a free-will offering. The Church cannot regulate by law the amount of each member's proportion, nor censure or punish those who either give stingily or who refuse to give at all; and for this plain reason: such contributions are nowhere in the Scriptures made conditions of Church membership, nor are they plainly inferable from any general requisition imposed as a term of communion in the Bible. The Church, therefore, cannot impose them without assuming legislative authority,—a power nowhere conferred in the Holy Scriptures. How far each one of us has done his duty as the stewards of his Lord's bounty, or how far we have failed to support the gospel and supply the necessities of the poor, according to the means which Providence has placed in our power, cannot be questions of Church discipline, but must be reserved to the judgment of the great day. The delinquents in these respects, are the tares which must be suffered to grow with the wheat until the harvest, lest in rooting them out we should root out the wheat also.

We know not how this authority to "legislate," which has been assumed by the Church councils of the new Church, may be viewed by others,—but we are free to confess that it was among the innovations which we most dreaded of all that were proposed by our reformers during the whole revolutionary movement. We saw from the first, that a lay delegation in our General Conference would essentially change the relation between the ministers and the laity. Under the existing economy, the preachers had no right, and had never assumed any, to impose a pecuniary stipulation on the membership, as a consideration for their ministerial services, for the plain reason that we were not present, either in person or by representatives, in the body where the preachers' allowances were ascertained. The preachers had a right to say for themselves that they would not receive more than a certain amount, but they could not say that the members upon a circuit or station should pay any amount whatever. The membership neither sit in their assembly, nor make their appointments,—and, therefore, if they receive the preacher sent to them, it must be a voluntary act, and the support they give must be a voluntary contribution—a free-will offering.

But change the constitution of the General Conference. Give the

immediate representatives of the people a seat in that body, and it follows of necessity that any salary which may be allowed the preachers becomes obligatory upon the membership, and I am not sure that the stewards of the circuit or station would not be legally bound to pay the uttermost farthing. This is the state of the new Church. The membership, by their votes in the convention, decided that they were bound to "make the preachers a righteous compensation for their labours." They also fixed the amount of his salary. In the annual conference they participate in the appointing power, which assigns the preachers their several stations and circuits, and are fully empowered, as members of that body, to take the necessary measures to raise money for the payment of the preachers' salary. The stewards of the circuit seem, therefore, bound to pay him his claim, thus ascertained and allowed, without delay or abatement; but if the claim cannot be recovered of the stewards by an action at law, the members of the Church are bound, both in honour and honesty, to pay the debt they have contracted,—the "compensation" they have allowed by a solemn act of legislation, passed by their representatives.

We have said that we dreaded this innovation; and we did so, first, because, if the obligations which grow out of it are scrupulously fulfilled—and surely they ought to be fulfilled—the necessity of levying taxes is inevitable.

If any be covetous, they will not contribute unless they are coerced; and the honest member, who considers himself bound by the acts of his representatives, will find himself compelled to make up the deficiencies of the members who love their money better than their word. This would be a grievance too intolerable to bear,—and as the stipulation is binding, there could be no alternative but to levy upon the membership according to their respective abilities; or, adjudging each member to be equally benefitted by the services of the preacher, to lay a capitation tax.

Secondly. As "the best of men are but men at best," and preachers very much like other men—that is, Christian men—we should greatly fear the consequences of placing them beyond the reach of their immediate flocks; that is, we should deem it unsafe to make their support or their "compensation" dependant upon anything else than the love and sympathies of those to whom they minister. That the danger we apprehend is not visionary, we appeal to the records of the Christian Church in all its ages, and we are persuaded that the wise man spoke wisely, when he said, "The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be."

This, then, is the result of the mighty clamour we have heard about representation. The members of the Methodist Episcopal Church deny to their Church councils any legislative authority, civil or ecclesiastical. They have no power to tax them, nor to impose upon them any term of communion not sanctioned by express warrant of Scripture, or clearly

inferable from the doctrines or precepts of Christianity. These powers have never been exercised, and are frankly and explicitly disclaimed. We, therefore, are willing to commit to our ministers the regulations necessary to the great work to which they are called,—the propagation of the gospel, and the oversight of the flock; and without stipulation in respect to hire, or “compensation,” we contribute voluntarily what we deem adequate to their support, as God may give ability; or, if we do not, we hold ourselves amenable only to Him who searcheth the heart, and who will reward every man according to his work. Having neither legislation to do nor taxes to levy, we desire neither the expense nor trouble of lay representation,—we have no faith in works of supererogation.

Our reformers, on the contrary, have dignified their superior councils with the title of “Legislative Assemblies.” These assemblies may, therefore, make laws and enforce them by ecclesiastical sanctions. They do not, we hope and believe, claim the right of repealing the laws heretofore made by the great Lawgiver; neither do the Romanists; but as they claim the right of legislation, they must deem the Christian code incomplete, and, therefore, requiring some supplementary statutes. We are not told, because we suppose they do not yet know, when the canon will be completed. Perhaps they may apply to father Peter for the musty traditions upon which he has been wont to draw when nothing was found in the Bible, to suit his occasions. Or peradventure their pretension may be a revival of the old claim of “mother Church,” to enforce the same submission to the decrees of councils as all Christians acknowledge to be due to the Scripture canon. But whatever be the pretension, if they have legislation there ought to be representation. If their legislative assemblies can make laws affecting property and Church membership, let them see to it, and be vigilant to watch the progress of those ecclesiastical and civil legislatures. But let them be honest; and when they promise, by their representatives, to give their preachers certain salaries let them redeem the pledge, and let their people know that they who are fairly represented ought to be equally taxed; for there is no other way by which pecuniary representative obligations and engagements can be fulfilled.

We had noticed, in looking over the constitution, doctrines, and discipline of the new Church, that there was to be found no expression of opinion favouring the doctrine which so universally prevails in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and, we believe, in all the evangelical Churches—namely, that *they who rightfully preach the gospel and administer its ordinances are called thereunto by the Holy Ghost*. This opinion, however, is founded upon Scripture and sustained by experience. It is, as we said before, professed by all the evangelical Churches, and wherever there has been a decline of piety and Christian zeal in any branch of the Church, it has been preceded or accompanied by some practical departure from this leading



principle of the Christian system, although the profession has been, for the most part, retained. So in the Church of England, the candidate for holy orders "trusts that he is moved by the Holy Ghost" to preach the gospel, although he has neither part nor lot in the matter himself, and though his life and conversation abundantly shows that his views in entering into the priest's office are entirely mercenary. The doctrines remain the same, though an unholy alliance with the State has rendered them entirely nugatory. And in the state of the different established Churches we find sufficient proof that so essential is the doctrine of a divine call to the ministry, that any departure from it, either in principle or practice, is sure to introduce a worldly-minded, covetous, carnal ministry, and all the consequences of their unholy ministration.

From the time when God called us to be a people, and thrust out the Wesleys and their sons in the gospel to preach a full, free, and present salvation, they spoke with one voice on this subject. They uniformly and unitedly declare that it was not of choice but of necessity that they entered upon the work. They were pressed in spirit, and could find no rest until they obeyed the call. In the history of the "Preachers' Experiences," collected and published by Mr. Wesley, we find but one testimony on this subject. None of them entered upon their labours or offered themselves to the work because *they thought themselves* peculiarly fitted by either gifts or grace for the duty; on the contrary, a conscious deficiency in both these respects led them strenuously to resist the impression which they felt. Some of them struggled against these impressions long and steadfastly, even to the loss of health and all personal enjoyments. Nor were they satisfied until their brethren urged their compliance, and it pleased God to make manifest to others the validity of their call by the success which, through his blessing, accompanied their labours.

The necessity of a special supernatural call to the ministry has not only been universally admitted by us from the beginning, but it has had a practical influence on the whole economy of Methodism. We have looked for the evidences of this call as a *sine qua non*, whenever one of our brethren has presented himself as a candidate for the ministry. If the candidate had given satisfactory evidence of a gracious work in his own soul, had clear and consistent views of gospel truth, and professed to believe himself called of God to the work of the ministry, we have only waited the confirmation which the fruit of his labours only could give, that this call was genuine. Every Methodist knows how easily we have been satisfied in respect to what are called gifts or natural endowments, and they also know that experience has justified us in this matter. It is a fact attested by our whole history, that the most useful of our ministers have entered upon the work with very little of that kind of preparation which the wisdom of this world would deem essential to success. Nay, we will go farther, and say

that we have never known an instance of failure where there was the evidence of a deep conviction of the worth of souls and the danger to which the unconverted were exposed, accompanied by ardent zeal for the glory of God, and that love—that all-pervading love for perishing sinners—which nothing can excite but the love of God shed abroad in the heart. Let a preacher of the most common natural endowments, and even less literary acquirements, have the above-mentioned preparation, and withal a firm and abiding conviction that the great Shepherd of souls has called and appointed him to gather sinners into his fold, and his success is certain. Let him be faithful, and he who has called will qualify him for the work. It is for the glory of God that the success of the gospel should not depend upon the natural powers of the preacher, but upon the power of Him by whom he is sent, that the excellency of the power should be seen to be of God, not of man. Let us never lose sight of first principles. If there be no special call to the ministry, we have been deceived from the beginning; and the success which has crowned the original plan and design of the Wesleys is the most inexplicable thing in human history. They designed, from the first institution of a ministry without classical literature or collegiate qualifications, to revive, in the other Churches, and especially in the Established Church, the principles and practice of primitive Christianity; and they have shown that now, as in the beginning, God is in no wise dependant upon institutions of human learning for the instruments which may be necessary to effect his great purposes of love and mercy to man. He still takes his messengers, the heralds of salvation, indifferently from the humbler avocations of life or from the feet of Gamaliel; but, in all instances, he who “would be wise must become a fool, that he may be wise.” God alone can call and qualify for his own work.

We have said before, that these opinions were held abstractly by other Churches, but they had ceased to influence them, in regard to practice, when Mr. Wesley commenced his ministry. Seminaries had been established and endowed, where boys were sent to be prepared for the ministry, as for any other business; and yet these, when admitted, were made to declare they were inwardly moved by the Holy Ghost to enter upon *this trade or profession!* By the blessing of God upon the labours of the Methodist ministry, light has pervaded all the Churches, in a greater or less degree, upon this subject; and though in the Church establishments the practice of educating boys for holy orders still obtains, the absurdity and inconsistency of it begins to be generally acknowledged, and the practice will be abandoned as soon as the “livings” of the ministry, now secured by law, shall be dependant on the voluntary contributions of the people.

In proof of this, it will be observed, that in this country theological schools are established, not professedly to educate for the ministry those

who desire to follow preaching as a trade, but to give the necessary instruction to those who are supposed and who profess to be called to the work. And hence, education is afforded more or less gratuitously to all who are believed to have this call, and whose circumstances require such aid. It does not fall in with our present purpose to examine the propriety of this greatly modified plan of making preachers. We have pointed to it only to show the universal prevalence of the opinion which obtains in all the Churches, that no man can rightfully or conscientiously enter upon the work of the ministry without being convinced of a personal special call thereto by "the Lord of the harvest."

Conformably to these opinions, the Methodist Episcopal Church retain in their Discipline a distinct recognition of the doctrine that none may enter her ministry without the special appointment of the Holy Spirit.

The tenth section of our Discipline treats "of the trial of those who think they are *moved by the Holy Ghost to preach*."

"*Question*. How shall we try those who profess to be moved by the Holy Ghost to preach?

"*Answer*. 1. Let the following questions be asked, viz.:—Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation?

"2. Have they gifts (as well as grace) for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound understanding, a right judgment in the things of God, a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them any degree of utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly?

"3. Have they the fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin and converted to God by their preaching?

"As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God to preach. These we receive as sufficient proof that he is moved by the Holy Ghost."

Of all this there is not a word in the new constitution or Discipline. The Methodist Protestants acknowledge no special agency of the Holy Spirit in making their preachers. They do not require of their candidates any profession or declaration that they think they are moved by any divine influence to enter upon the great duties of preaching the gospel, administering its ordinances, and taking the oversight of the flock of Christ. All that we find on the subject is in the article in their Discipline, headed "Quarterly Conference," and is contained in the third section, as follows:—

"3. The first quarterly conference in each conference year shall appoint a committee of examination to assist, advise, and examine candidates for the ministry. It shall be the duty of the committee to see that the candi-

dates pursue the course of reading prescribed by the Discipline; to examine them occasionally on doctrines and religious experience; and when they shall have made the necessary attainments, to give them a written testimonial of their qualifications. But no committee shall give a testimonial except the candidate be a man of unexceptionable moral character, genuine piety, and have respectable attainments—at least an ability to state and defend the leading doctrines of Christianity.

“No person shall be licensed to preach except he present a testimonial from the committee of examination.

“The following questions shall be put to each candidate, and if he answer them satisfactorily he may be licensed :—

“Have you faith in Christ; and are you striving to be holy in heart, and in all manner of conversation ?

“Have you any other motive in requesting license to preach than a desire to be instrumental in edifying the Church of God, calling sinners to repentance, and saving your own soul and those that hear you ?

“Do you believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary to salvation ?

“Have you examined our constitution and Discipline; do you approve of them, and are you willing to comply with their requirements ?

“Are you solvent ?”

We have been long apprized of the opinions of some of the “reformers” in our city upon this subject. We have heard them not only deny the special call of the ministry, but treat the notion with ridicule and contempt; yet we had not supposed the opinion to have prevailed so extensively as to effect the expulsion of this essential doctrine from their code. The fact, however, is not now to be denied, and we view it as ominous of other grievous departures from first principles in future.

Perhaps some of our readers may be charitable enough to attribute what we allege rather to omission than design—they will not be disposed to believe that so fundamental a principle in the Christian system has been purposely left out of the constitution and Discipline prepared by the congregated wisdom of the reformers. If any of our readers be so charitably disposed we respect their sentiments, but we must correct their opinions. If they will be at the pains of consulting the official paper of that Church, of May 13th, 1831, they will find, under the editorial head, and of course from the agent appointed by the convention to express their views and opinions, an article which clearly develops the doctrine they hold on this subject. We have not room for the insertion of the whole article, but we extract, for the satisfaction of the reader, such parts of it as may more immediately relate to the subject under consideration :—

“We cannot refrain from blaming those Christians who, with *talents every way calculated* to advocate the interests of religion, and administer

its blessings to willing multitudes, refuse to exercise their gifts in the most effectual and appropriate way. It will not do to plead the want of a 'call' to the ministry, or of a 'direct commission from the Holy Ghost' to preach the gospel. Look abroad over the earth, and behold how many are asleep in their wickedness, dead in trespasses and in sin. Can you not find a *voice*—do you not feel it your imperious duty to cry aloud, 'Awake, thou that sleepest! arise from the dead?'

"Yes. Christ speaks to each of his followers as he spake to Peter, 'Lovest thou me?' 'Then feed my sheep!' And every one of his followers must accomplish the command as God has given him ability. If *you have the talent*, stand up in the great congregation and declare the marvellous works of the Almighty. If you do not, be fearful lest God call you to a reckoning for the nonimprovement of your gifts." The editor goes on to complain, that while sinners are sleeping and Christians are falling these *talented* men "coldly fold their arms in quietude, saying, God has never commissioned me, I have no *call* from the Spirit. This will not do. Have you sincerity towards God? Do *you feel conscious of an ability to understand the Scriptures; rightly to divide the word of truth; to proclaim its doctrines, denounce its threatenings, and administer its promises?* Then are you inexcusable if you hold your peace."—*Mutual Rights and Methodist Protestant*, May 13, 1831.

It will be seen by the above extract, that the organ of the convention considers a "consciousness of ability" a sufficient authority to preach the gospel,—nay, to preach it to willing multitudes in "the great congregation." It will not do, we are told, to wait for any supernatural call or qualifications—for any direct commission from the Holy Ghost. If the aspirant is "conscious" of the ability, he must go to work.

Now we not only disagree with this organ of the Church, but we hold opinions directly adverse to his, and we are sure that the observation of all judicious Christians will sustain us. We believe that a consciousness of "ability to understand the Scriptures; rightly to divide the word of truth; to proclaim its doctrines, denounce its threatenings, and administer its promises," would be rather a *disqualification* for the ministerial calling. It would argue great pride and presumption for a man to have such a conceit of himself; and certainly pride and presumption are bad ingredients in the qualifications of a preacher of the gospel. One so filled with high notions of his talents would not be likely to be approved by Him who said, "I am meek and lowly in heart." On the contrary, he who *feels* the importance of the work, and who is really best fitted for it, will always have the most humbling views of himself. Yet such men are always ready, because they conceit they have, as the editor says, "*talents every way calculated to advocate the interests of religion and administer its blessings to willing multitudes.*"

Mr. Charles Wesley has very forcibly described the character of both the suitable and unsuitable messenger of Christ in four short lines :—

“How ready *he* is to go,  
Whom God has never sent;  
How cautious, diffident, and slow,  
His *chosen instrument* !”

In conformity with the notion that no special call of “the Lord of the harvest” is necessary to furnish labourers for the gospel field, but that those who are themselves conscious of the talents necessary for the work of an evangelist may take upon themselves this “office and ministry,” we find the following notice of an intended institution in the paper alluded to above :—

“It is contemplated, by some benevolent persons of our communion in this city, to form an education society, for the benefit of those among us *who may wish to devote themselves to the ministry.*”

Nothing more is necessary than a wish to devote themselves to the ministry. Now, if our friends of the new Church will only establish such a society, with the necessary funds, and then guarantee a good salary to all who wish to devote themselves to the ministry, I will engage to insure them as many preachers as they may require; and I will further engage that they shall, every man of them, be “conscious of their own ability” to do everything which may be reasonably required of them. O, are there none in the Methodist Protestant Church who will rise on the Lord’s side, and vindicate the right of the great Head of the Church to call and to qualify his own ministers? Many of their preachers were once preachers with us. They severally professed, before they received license, to believe they were “moved by the Holy Ghost to preach the gospel.” Do they now renounce the profession? Did they deceive us, or were they themselves deceived? We recollect that many years ago we heard Mr. Snethen advocate the cause of a brother who came before a quarterly conference for a license to preach. The applicant had been a preacher, but, under some strong temptation, had withdrawn from the Church. Having repented of his folly and been restored to membership, he now applied for a restoration of his ministerial functions. The brethren hesitated and Mr. Snethen pressed his petition. We shall never forget his glowing description of the feelings of a man “called of the Holy Ghost” to preach the gospel. He described it as a “fire in his bones,” which consumed him by day and by night, until he became “obedient to the heavenly calling;” and he warned the brethren of “the awful responsibility of restraining the servant of God who had his commission in his heart to call sinners to repentance.” Mr. Snethen, therefore, did believe, *from his own experience*, in the divine call to the ministry. We have no reason to believe he has renounced this belief, as he was not a member of the convention. Will he

not yet raise his voice and venture to show his brethren their error? Will he not venture, while he is yet spared, to do his utmost to save a people whom he has greatly contributed to lead out of our fold from a mistake which threatens to overwhelm them with the curse of a worldly, vain, and self-seeking ministry. We hope he will; and may God give him success!

At all events, the Episcopal Methodists will abide in the belief that He who hath "ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things, gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ." Eph. iv, 10, 12. And we must continue to look to him only for pastors and teachers. We must not attempt either to make them without his "calling" or to mend those whom he does call, in theological seminaries. We will rejoice when he selects a Paul from among the learned, nor will we be less thankful when he shall call a Peter from among the fishermen. He loveth the Church, and if we abide in his love, we shall never want for pastors or teachers taught of him and fitted for the duty he has assigned them. To him be the glory throughout all ages. Amen.

. Every one who has looked into the controversial writings of our adversaries, will have perceived how fondly they are wont to dwell upon the unalterable and inalienable *right* of representation. The most vehement declamation has been incessantly poured forth against us, because our "legislature," as they absurdly call our General Conference, is composed exclusively of itinerant ministers: and this continues to be their theme, notwithstanding the Conference has formally disavowed all claim to legislative authority over the Church; and we have shown that in our whole history no instance can be cited in which such power has been exercised.

The Methodists have always acted upon the conviction that the laws, as well as the doctrines, by which Christians, collectively or individually, are to be governed, are plainly laid down in the Bible; and that no Church council has a right to repeal, alter, amend, or add to them. All that any ecclesiastical body is authorized to do in the matter, is simply to provide such prudential regulations as may be necessary to the propagation of these doctrines, and the execution of these laws. To illustrate this view of ecclesiastical authority, take a particular case:—It is a law of the gospel, that the incorrigible drunkard shall be expelled from Church communion. Now, it will not be pretended that any Church council has a right to make any new law in this case, or to repeal or modify the original statute. What, then, remains for the Church to do in the premises? Simply to execute the law. But to do so, some mode of proceeding must be prescribed by which the fact shall be ascertained; that is, by which it shall be ascertained whether a member accused of drunkenness is, or is not,

guilty of the charge ; and the proceedings prescribed by the Church in such a case we call a prudential rule or regulation, in contradistinction to the law which it is intended to enforce. The law must remain the same under all the varying circumstances of the Church. The rule by which it is enforced, may, and indeed must necessarily change, according to the particular condition of the Church. For although the design of the rule must always be the same, yet the fitness of its provisions will always depend upon the state of the people for whose use it is intended.

What we have said of the law in regard to drunkenness, will apply to every other law of the gospel. No Church has a right to enjoin upon her members either more or less than is commanded by the one only Lord and Lawgiver ; but every Church is bound to enforce all the precepts of the gospel upon her members, and to visit delinquencies with such penalties, and such penalties only, as are prescribed in the Christian code. The proceedings to be instituted, in order to ascertain the guilt or innocence of a member, is left to the discretion of the Church, because no particular rule could be adapted to the ever-varying external circumstances of time and place.

After the experience of a century, the great body of Methodists are confirmed in the opinion, that the making of these prudential rules and regulations may be safely confided to their travelling ministers. *First.* Because from the immediate and constant superintendence of the Church, they are necessarily taught by experience how to adapt these rules to the peculiar condition of our people.

*Secondly.* Because being identified in interest and feeling with the membership, and absolutely dependant upon them for the supply of their temporal wants, they can be under no temptation to make any rule which will tend to injure the Church ; but, on the contrary, must be induced by every motive which ordinarily operates upon the minds of men, to promote the general and individual prosperity of the people whom God hath committed to their charge.

*Thirdly.* Because the rules in regard to moral discipline, having been long tested and approved by the membership, are found to require very little alteration ; while the great business of Conference is to devise ways and means to fulfil, to the utmost possible extent, a commandment given exclusively to the ministry—namely, “Go preach my gospel to every creature.” As the ministry are answerable to God for the faithful execution of this command, we deem it right to let them make their own regulations in regard to it, both because we cannot release them from or divide with them responsibility which their ministerial duty imposes, and because we modestly presume that their general observation and practical experience render them more competent than we can be, to devise the best plans of executing their great missionary operations.



And *lastly*, because they have never done anything to forfeit our confidence. In the whole history of the Church it cannot be shown that any rule has been made which violated the rights or injured the interests of the membership. On the contrary, it can and has been shown, that the General Conference has, from time to time, as the improvement of the Church authorized it, transferred to the laity prerogatives and powers originally vested in the ministry, and that, too, without any demand or petition from the lay members.

Under the regulations heretofore adopted we have prospered beyond all human calculation, and have been saved from the agitations and strifes of contested elections, as well as from the expense of lay delegations ; and until some obvious necessity shall make it proper to change our economy, we have concluded "to let well-enough alone." In short, while we continue to be satisfactorily represented by our itinerant ministers, we are content to forego any other representation in the General Conference.

But we are told that the right of equal and individual representation is a natural and inalienable right ; and, therefore, we have no authority to commit the making of rules and regulations of any sort to our travelling preachers.

We allege, on the contrary, that all government is founded in social compact, and is, or ought to be, intended to promote the common good of the community. The community have, therefore, a right to adopt the form of government which they deem best calculated to promote the general interest and welfare ; and hence, if the Methodist community believe that the objects of their association will be better secured by their present plan than by any other, they have a right to adhere to it. In other words, if they think that under existing circumstances they will be better represented by travelling preachers than by laymen, they are under no moral or religious obligation to change the composition of the General Conference.

But if it be true that the right to be equally represented in the supreme council of the Church be common and inalienable, how will the Methodist Protestant constitution abide the test ? Is the representation equal ? Certainly not. It distinctly acknowledges at least two privileged orders *in legislative power*. The "stationed"\* ministers enjoy a representation equal in amount to the whole membership, although they do not probably bear the numerical proportion of one to three hundred ; and the "unstationed ministers" have a delegation, on certain occasions, vastly disproportioned to their numbers. Are these natural rights ? or have they been conceded on the ground of expediency ? They are certainly not natural rights, nor are they conferred by Scriptural authority. They rest, then, exclusively on the ground of expediency ; and it follows, therefore, that whatever

\* The distinctive appellations of "travelling" and "local" preachers do not obtain in the new organization. It recognises only "stationed" and "unstationed" preachers.

alteration the Church may hereafter think it expedient to make in this respect, may be lawfully and *rightfully* made. But, then, it follows also, that if the Methodist Episcopal Church deem it expedient to have no lay delegation at all, we have the same right to intrust the whole to our itinerant ministers, as the Protestant Methodists have to confer the one-half; as neither the one nor the other is consonant to the notions they have propagated about abstract natural rights, but is solely justified by expediency.

But we should like to know by what authority the new Church have excluded females from all participation in their government. If on the principle of natural inalienable rights, we are totally at a loss for the argument on which this exclusion is founded. Nor will the political reasons upon which females are excluded from a participation in civil government avail them. In civil society women are supposed to be represented by their fathers or husbands, whose interests are necessarily identified with their daughters or wives respectively. But in the Church this is not the case. The wife or daughter may be a member of the Church, while a husband or father is not. They are not, as in civil government, necessarily members of the same community, and, therefore, the female members of the Church may have no voice, either positively or virtually, in the "*law-making department*," and consequently, according to the definition of the new bill of rights, they "are slaves!" This is a conclusion which no sophistry can evade, and truly "the age of chivalry is gone."

If the sages of the new Church should allege Scriptural authority for excluding females from all participation in Church government, we shall not think ourselves bound to contest the ground; but we shall insist that they alter their definition of slavery: for otherwise they will be under the necessity of admitting that the author of the Christian religion had made women slaves; and that Church communion and fellowship, while it elevates and ennobles men, degrades females from the natural rights and privileges of human nature.

The exclusion of females must, therefore, rest, as their other rules do, upon the *expediency* of the measure, and thus the whole controversy between the old Church and the new, is reduced to the simple question, Which government is best calculated to effect the common objects of the association, to wit, the spread of the gospel over the world, and the promotion of individual piety among their members? So far as we can anticipate results from the probable effects of human regulations, we have given our opinion heretofore. On the side of the Methodist Episcopal Church we have experience to guide our calculations; on the other side it is an untried experiment, the success of which can only be estimated by its likeness to institutions of a similar, though not exactly of the same kind, which have heretofore been made in the Christian world, and which have disappointed the fondest hopes of their authors. Our reformers have

started a little too late. The age of visionary speculation is passing away, and we are entering upon an era of common sense and matter of fact. Nothing will hereafter pass for knowledge in philosophy which is not sustained by experiment; or in government, which is not predicated upon utility. The Abbe Seyes and the other constitution-makers of the former French revolution would find dull sale for their wares at the present time, even in revolutionary France. Men have learned that laws cannot be made in anticipation of their wants, but must be adapted to their necessities; and that speculative innovations upon government are seldom adapted to the peculiar condition and circumstances of those for whom they are intended. The government which is to provide for human wants cannot be made in advance of the occasions which require its numerous provisions; but must be suggested by these wants as they are developed by time and circumstances. Government must provide for *man as he is*, not for *man as he should be*.

Under the new constitution, a preacher cannot be transferred from one annual conference to another without his consent. So that however full some conferences may be, where the adequate provision made for preachers may induce them to congregate, the conferences which offer less pecuniary inducement may go unsupplied, however destitute of the word of life.

We look upon this provision of the new Church as among the many grievous departures from the primitive design of Methodism, to send the gospel to those who are too poor to pay for it, or too ignorant to know the value of it—to promulgate in the dark and desolate places of the earth the glad tidings of salvation, by a company of missionary preachers, who pledge themselves to go where they may be sent, by those whom they have appointed to distribute the labourers through the vineyard. Whenever this original design shall be abandoned, or be frustrated by self-seeking or love of ease in the preachers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, the glory will have departed, and the tendency to congregational government will be certain and inevitable.

We had long since suggested, that the want of general superintendents in the new Church, would render it impossible to unite the different annual conferences in a common interest and effort. It will be found impossible for each conference to have the particular information in regard to the state and condition of the others, which is necessary to enable them to act intelligently for the common good. General superintendents are essentially necessary to the confederated conferences, not only as a common bond of union, but as a common medium of communication and intelligence. It is only through persons having a common oversight of all the work in each conference that the preachers can be profitably appointed according to their several abilities, and the particular exigencies

of the circuits and stations. But as if this were not enough to contend with in the new scheme, the framers of the constitution have made it optional with a preacher, whether he will leave his particular conference district or not. He may not be refused if he wishes to go, nor sent if he declines going. With such impediments in the outset, a general confederated itinerancy is wholly impracticable. The union is a rope of sand. It will crumble to pieces upon the slightest agitation.

But while we anticipate the effect of an express provision in the new scheme to secure a travelling preacher from being transferred from one conference to another without his consent, we ought not to forget that systems of the most perfect organization may be impaired, and even destroyed, without directly altering any of their fundamental principles. Innovations slide in imperceptibly, and that which is occasionally tolerated to suit a temporary purpose, first becomes precedent, then custom, and finally custom becomes the paramount law.

We should not have discharged our duty to the Methodist Episcopal Church if we were to neglect an admonition on this subject. We have reviewed the constitution and Discipline of the new Church chiefly with a view of showing its unsuitableness as a system for the government of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and our inquiries have convinced us that our safety and usefulness depend chiefly upon the preservation of our economy in its pristine simplicity and energy. But we are also convinced that this cannot be done without a frequent recurrence to first principles, and unabating watchfulness against innovations in *practice* as well as in theory.

The original power of the superintendents to station the preachers has not been curtailed by any rule of the General Conference. They have the right, without restriction or appeal, to transfer preachers in acceptable standing from one conference to another, as they may deem it necessary for the general good. But is this power, so necessary to the common welfare, not in fact abridged by the force of custom? Has it not become an odious exercise of prerogative to transfer a preacher without his consent? And is it not generally understood that this *will not* be done? If these questions are answered in the affirmative, we do not hesitate to say that it is time to look the evil in the face and hasten to remove it. It is a grievous departure from first principles, which has grown out of a spirit of accommodation, dangerous to the very existence of Methodism, as known and understood by Mr. Wesley and Mr. Asbury, and by all those whose labours laid the foundation of our present prosperity.

We are aware of the inconveniences which often attend transfers to distant conferences, but we are not aware that these inconveniences bear more heavily upon the preachers now than in former times, and yet the memoirs of our old preachers will show that they visited most of the

settlements in the United States in the course of their itinerant life, and hence they continued their usefulness and acceptableness down to the latest period of their ministry. It was a remark of one of our olden-time preachers, that "Mr. Asbury was so constantly in the habit of sacrificing all his own comforts and conveniences to the welfare of the Church, that he would not permit any desire to accommodate the preachers to compromise this primary object." And much as we sympathize with our preachers, we would not that any relaxation in this principle should take place in the exercise of the episcopal prerogative. It would finally effect the destruction of both preachers and people.

The conferences, as the number of preachers increase, are divided, and the boundaries of the districts are necessarily narrowed. The necessity for such divisions arises from the inconvenience of congregating in large bodies, in small towns and villages, where the friends are not sufficiently numerous to accommodate the preachers. Some of the preachers have families too large to be provided for, except in a few circuits and stations, and to those they are sent in succession, until they excite as little interest as local preachers, and for the same reason; when these same preachers might be continued in all their primitive acceptability and usefulness if they were transferred to conferences in which they were strangers. It is in vain to complain of the love of novelty in the hearers. It arises from causes too deeply fixed in human nature to be resisted or controlled. Our business is not to control it, but to take advantage of it. This was Mr. Wesley's opinion, and he was so good a judge of human nature that it is not safe to differ with him. Perhaps, indeed, the superior advantages of an itinerant ministry depend more upon this propensity of mankind than upon any other cause; and, if so, we should be exceedingly cautious how we forego the advantages we have heretofore possessed, by confining the sphere of any minister's labours within the narrow boundaries of one annual conference.

Another practice which has grown into custom, and is fast obtaining the force of law, is the continuing presiding elders in their several districts uniformly for four years. We apprehend this to be dangerous to the primitive spirit of our institutions, for the following, among other reasons:—*First.* If they are seldom changed when no complaint exists, or no unfitness appears, it will, after a time, become a reproach to him who is changed, and will require considerable explanation to remove from the minds of the people the suspicion that something improper in the conduct of the presiding elder has occasioned the removal. *Secondly.* From the great extent of the work assigned to the superintendents, they cannot obtain the necessary knowledge of the individual preachers or circuits to make the appointments, without deriving the requisite information from the presiding elders. But the presiding elder, by continuing, or expecting to continue, long

in the same district, becomes partial in his views and feelings. The interests of his own immediate field of labour present themselves to him with a force and freshness which greatly impairs his vision. The general interest is not, perhaps, lost sight of, but it is too remote to come into competition with the pressing necessities of his own flock. Meantime his own immediate interests may sway his judgment. The provision for himself and family may depend, in a good degree, on the kind of preachers which may be sent into his district, and the bishop, whose duty it is to make the appointments, finds himself embarrassed by the conflicting opinions of his council. Now, a frequent removal of the presiding elders from one district to another would prevent all these inconveniences, especially if their destinations were kept profoundly secret until all the other appointments were finally made. The particular interest of a presiding elder's district would have a less *localizing* effect if he were not sure he should return to it, and he would be better fitted to take a general view of the work and of the appointments which would best promote the common good. At any rate, the experiment is easily made, and cannot be attended with any permanent evil consequences, while it seems to be required by circumstances, and will be evidently justified by the primitive spirit and practice of Methodism. Having said so much upon the necessity of preserving the original vigour of the itinerancy, and of the means of effecting that object, it would be unfair if we did not advert to the duty of the membership to give all possible aid in accomplishing this good work.

It must be obvious that if it is the duty of the preacher to go where he is sent, it is equally the duty of the membership to receive him cordially and affectionately. Dictation to the bishops would be as destructive if assumed by the membership as if claimed by the ministry, and a refusal to *receive* would be as great and as fatal a departure from Methodism as a refusal to go. Remonstrance on good grounds may be allowed in either case; but an ultimate determination to submit to what may be deemed individual hardship is indispensable if the efficiency of our itinerant plan is to be preserved. If one circuit or station claims the right of selecting or nominating its preachers, all may claim the same privilege, and then the very foundation of the whole system would be destroyed. For the same preachers would be chosen by many circuits and stations, and, ultimately, would be set up to the highest bidder. The rich would be gratified and the poor left to their poverty and privations. It would no longer be the boast of Methodism that the poor have the gospel preached unto them, and the great Head of the Church would speedily remove our candlestick out of its place. An intimation of this sad privation may be seen of all men, in the fact that in the whole history of our Church there has not, to our knowledge, occurred a single instance in which the pertinacious deter-

mination of any circuit or station to have a certain preacher, has not, if gratified by the bishops, terminated in mortification and disappointment, if in nothing worse. And, on the contrary, appointments which at first were thought injudicious, but which have been submitted to in humble dependence upon the blessing of God, have often turned out the most happy that could have been made. He whose own observation does not furnish examples to justify these remarks has been a very inattentive observer of our history.

Again, that our primitive plan of itinerancy may be preserved in all its efficiency, the membership ought to make such pecuniary arrangements as may enable the bishop in his appointments to suit *the preacher to the place*, instead of being compelled, by the weight of his family, to *suit the place to the preacher*. This may be done without offering any pecuniary inducements to young men to enter the ministry. A plan of this kind is in successful progress in the Baltimore Conference, under the direction of "The Preachers' Aid Society." The constitution was published some time ago in the Christian Advocate, and in the Itinerant, and we are happy to inform our brethren of other conferences that it has, so far, succeeded beyond our most sanguine expectations. Finally, we would say of our whole economy what Mr. Wesley said of the General Rules,—do not mend, but keep it. But then to keep it we must frequently recur to first principles, and watch with jealousy against innovations of a practical as well as of a theoretical nature—against such as glide in insidiously, as well as those which are openly proposed. None can destroy Methodism but the Methodists themselves, whether by open assault or unwatchfulness.

REMARKS ON AN ADDRESS TO THE MEMBERS OF THE METHODIST  
EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN QUEEN ANNE'S COUNTY,

PUBLISHED IN THE CENTREVILLE TIMES AND PUBLIC ADVERTISER,  
AND SIGNED, ROBERT SPARKS, CHAIRMAN, AND THOMAS C. BROWNE,  
SECRETARY.

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To enter into a particular examination and refutation of the prefatory remarks of the separatists would not comport with the convenience of the writer nor, perhaps, of the editor of the "Itinerant." We shall only make a few passing observations upon the preliminary parts of the address, and chiefly confine ourselves to the causes which the separatists assign for their secession.

The presiding-elder question,\* to which they allude, is a question of expediency in which the travelling preachers only are interested. However it may be decided, it can in no way affect the original principles of Methodism or of Methodist Church government. Neither are we concerned to inquire upon what grounds it is asserted in the address, that "the Methodist Church government in England is freer than that of the Methodist Episcopal Church in America," nor inquire into the truth of the assertion that the government of the British connexion "is very similar to that of the Associated Methodist Churches." We suppose that in England, as in America, people only become Methodists by choice, and cannot be compelled to submit to the government of the Church a moment longer than they please. We hold the membership, therefore, alike free under both governments. They have no bishops nor presiding elders in England, we are told; and we reply, they have not the same occasion for them that we have. They have but one conference, which meets annually; and all the preachers being present, they can be stationed by a committee chosen at the meeting. But it is obvious that this arrangement would not meet the necessities of a connexion having seventeen confederated conferences, one of which may include more square miles than is contained in all England. These cannot act in union, nor distribute the ministerial labour as the wants of the different conferences may require, without a common superintendency. This superintendency was instituted by Mr. Wesley, and although he objected to the name of bishop on account of his connexion with the Church of England, yet, as bishop is the Scriptural appellation of a Church overseer, and as we had dissolved all political and ecclesiastical connexion with the Church of England, we have just called our general superintendents by the appellation given to such officers in the Bible—namely, bishops.

\* The manner of selecting them,—whether by the bishops, or by the annual conferences,—was a subject which, at one time, greatly agitated the Church.



Let it be remembered, however, that although Mr. Wesley preferred the name of superintendent to that of bishop, yet his general superintendents, and even his general assistant, exercised more authority than our bishops do. In fact, the bishops exercise no authority in the Church except in the appointment of the preachers. No one feels their power, therefore, except those who conferred it upon them, and who can abolish the office or restrain the prerogative when they deem it expedient to do so.

Our brethren in England have no more occasion for presiding elders than for general superintendents. The density of their population enables them so to circumscribe their circuits, that a chairman of a district can superintend the concerns of more circuits, without being absent from his own regular appointments, than we include in a presiding elder's district. Our reformers seem never to reflect, when they are comparing systems of government, upon the different circumstances of the people for whom the systems are designed; and what is worse, in the present instance, they do not seem to understand the structure of the governments of which they are speaking. We should like to know in what part of its economy the Methodist Church government, as established by Mr. Wesley, is "very similar to that of the Associated Methodist Churches." We confess we did not know that anything like the constitution of the "Associated Churches" had ever been instituted before, either for civil or ecclesiastical purposes. We had been led to think it perfectly "*sui generis*."

But we hasten to consider the causes which have impelled the separatists to secede from our Church. The first of these is the proceedings against reformers in Baltimore city station, and in the Baltimore Annual Conference.

With regard to this ground of complaint, we refer our readers to a "Narrative and Defence" of these proceedings, published in Baltimore, by the brethren who conducted the prosecutions before the Church, and the defence of the Rev. Mr. Hanson, the preacher in charge of the station. It will be seen by this pamphlet, that the persons expelled were not condemned for being reformers, nor for endeavouring to make reformers of others,—not for entering nor belonging to Union Societies, or inducing others to do so,—not for uttering and publishing their sentiments on Church government in general, nor of ours in particular; but for the grossest slander, calumny, and detraction,—for publications so inflammatory, abusive, and unfounded, that they scarcely find a parallel in our party newspapers, during the heat of a contested election. Extracts from these publications are given in the "Narrative," and an impartial public are left to decide upon the propriety of the course which the Church in Baltimore was *compelled* to take.

In the case of Mr. Dorsey and the Baltimore Annual Conference, the address sets forth that Mr. Dorsey was expelled for recommending the Mutual Rights to a friend:" but he not only recommended them to this

friend, but insulted his brethren in conference, by recommending them to "every member in the conference;" by openly renouncing the obligations he took upon himself at the time of his ordination, declaring that he made them in ignorance, and that if he had it to do over again he would insist upon qualifying them; and, finally, by circulating Mr. M'Caine's "History and Mystery," declaring he believed it to be true.

In the "Address," the dissolution of the district conference, in Baltimore, is said to have been effected by the votes of coloured preachers; whereas the votes on the question of dissolution, were eighteen for it, and fifteen against it, counting the votes of the suspended preachers in the negative. It is true that all the coloured preachers voted for the dissolution; but there was a majority of three in favour of the dissolution without counting the coloured preachers at all. The coloured preachers, however, were as much entitled to vote upon this question as the white preachers. The conference would not have been dissolved, had not the suspended ministers insisted upon a right to vote upon their own trials,—a principle which, if admitted, would be destructive to all Christian discipline. Upon the whole, we ask nothing more for the Church in Baltimore, than a fair and candid examination of the cases as presented in the "Narrative and Defence," comparing the statements with the publications on the opposite side,—and, whether the examiner be a new-side or an old-side man, the proceedings must be justified. Many, who had been exceedingly prejudiced in favour of the expelled members before they had an opportunity to hear both sides, have changed their opinions entirely upon reading the "Narrative and Defence;" and we hope that all who wish to make up an impartial judgment, will suspend their opinions until they give this publication a candid reading.

The second reason assigned for the secession is, the high pretensions said to be made by the late General Conference. It is stated in the Address, that the reformers "*petitioned the General Conference for a recognition of the principle of representation, when a majority of the Church should demand it,—pledging themselves that they would be satisfied to remain in her bosom, if they would do so, until a majority was for a lay delegation.*" What shall we say to this declaration? That *it is not true*, may be seen by consulting the petition itself. The petition or memorial of the convention of reformers which met in the city of Baltimore in November, 1827, and which is the *only one* to which "the Conference replied," contains no such proposition—no such promise—no such pledge or engagement as that alluded to in the extract we have given from the Address. The memorial of the convention did *not* ask for a lay delegation *when a majority should require it*, nor promise that reformers would remain in the Church, upon such "recognition," until a majority were for lay delegation. There is no room for evasion here.

The memorial alluded to either proposed what is alleged or it did not. If it did, it can be readily shown by quoting the language of the document itself, which was published in a pamphlet by the direction of the convention, and is, therefore, accessible. If the memorial contains no such proposition, and no such stipulation, then we leave all men to judge what credit is due to the statements of our oponents, heated as they are by party excitement. Whoever will take the pains to examine the petition to the General Conference, will find that so far from proposing or intimating a design to wait for an expression of the will of a majority of the Church, the petitioners, or memorialists, expressly declare it to be their opinion that a lay and local delegation are necessary for the peace of the Church "*at this conjuncture of time.*" And one of the reasons assigned by the Conference for not complying with the wishes of the memorialists, is founded on the well-known opposition to the measure by a vast majority of the membership.

But this is not all. In the Address it is stated that the General Conference replied to this proposition of the reformers, that they had no right to representation, "natural or acquired, and that they (the Conference) being the divinely-instituted overseers of the Church, have a divine right to govern the Church without control!" This is given in the Address not only with quotation marks, as if it were extracted from the reply of the Conference, but is put in italics, as if to draw particular attention to the high assumption of authority it includes. Now we assert, that this extract is not to be found in any paper issued by the Conference. They have nowhere nor at any time assumed such prerogatives; and we promise to acknowledge all the separatists have done to be right, if they will make good their assertion in this respect. The authors of the Address will not surely claim, among their other rights, a right to misquote the language *even* of the General Conference. Yet most certainly the Conference have never made use of the language attributed to them; nor made the pretensions which such language would imply. The Report of the Committee on Petitions and Memorials, as adopted by the General Conference, has been published, and is before the Church and the world. If it contains the language quoted in the Address, it can be easily shown, and our readers can appeal to it for themselves. Meantime, we assert that the Conference, so far from claiming a right to govern the Church without control—either by divine or human authority—*disclaim* any legislative authority at all over the Church, in the strict and proper meaning of the term. "We neither claim nor seek," say the Conference, "to be lords over God's heritage. In the sense of this passage, there is but one Lord and one Lawgiver. We arrogate no authority to enact any laws of our own, either of moral or of civil force. Our commission is to preach the gospel, and to enforce the moral discipline established by the one Lawgiver; by

those spiritual powers vested in us, as subordinate pastors who watch over souls, as they that must give account to the Chief Shepherd. We claim no strictly-legislative powers,—although we grant that the terms legislative and legislature have been sometimes used even among ourselves. In a proper sense, however, they are not strictly applicable to our General Conference.” The Conference, it appears by their report, believe that the great Head of the Church has given all the doctrines, and enacted all the laws which can be binding upon Christians. All that remains for any Church council to do is, to institute prudential regulations, by which these doctrines may be extensively preached, and by which the moral discipline of the Bible may be enforced among such as have voluntarily submitted to be governed by it. These regulations have been heretofore made and adapted to the particular state of the Methodist Church, by the travelling preachers. The spiritual and temporal interests of these preachers being identified with the prosperity of the Church, and having, by their occupation, an opportunity of becoming more generally acquainted with the various wants and circumstances of the connexion than the laity can be, the great majority of the membership are satisfied to leave these prudential regulations to their itinerant ministry; and the more so, because long experience has tested the safety and utility of the arrangement.

Finally, it will be seen, that of the causes assigned in the Address for separation, not one of them has now, nor ever had any existence.

1st. No person has been expelled from the Church in Baltimore, or elsewhere, for being reformers, nor for uttering or publishing their sentiments upon Church government; nor does the Discipline of the Church authorize such a measure.

2d. The authors of the Address have been entirely mistaken as to what was asked of the General Conference by the reformers, in the memorial sent up by the General Convention held in Baltimore, in November, 1827; and in which convention we believe the separatists were represented by delegates. In proof of their mistake in this matter, we refer them to the memorial itself, as published by authority of the convention, which is certainly good authority with the authors of the Address.

3d. They have been imposed upon with regard to the reply of the Conference to their memorial, and, in their Address, have attributed language to that body which they certainly never used, and pretensions which they never made. For our assertion we do not appeal to any individual authority. The answer of the Conference is before the world, embodied in the form of a Report of the Committee on Petitions and Memorials, which was unanimously adopted and ordered to be printed.

Charity, which hopeth all things, obliges us to hope that the authors of the Address did not *wilfully* misrepresent the facts to which we have

alluded. They must have been misled, and will retract the errors into which they have been unfortunately hurried by this unhappy controversy. But then, as the reasons by which they have attempted to justify their secession will be found unsupported by the facts on which they had supposed them to rest, they must either find some other justification, or honestly repent of the evil and return to the Church from which they have so causelessly separated.

## ANSWER TO VINDICATOR.

MR. EDITOR,—The article in ninth number of the *Itinerant*, over the signature L.,\* seems to have given much umbrage to the editor of the *Mutual Rights*, as well as to one of his correspondents. I beg leave to notice the remarks of each of these assailants, through the medium of your paper.

Mr. Dorsey, in a note appended to his appeal to the General Conference, as published in the *Mutual Rights* of the 20th of March, says, "A writer in the '*Itinerant*' who perhaps heard this appeal read in the General Conference, mistakes and says, 'I declared that I believed it, (Mr. M'Caine's *History and Mystery*,) to be true.' How far this writer can be relied on for veracity, I leave to the reader to determine."

The reader, however, will not, I presume, determine this matter until he has heard me in my defence, after which I shall cheerfully abide his decision.

Mr. Dorsey would mislead his readers into the erroneous supposition that the assertion concerning him was founded upon the following words in his appeal, which he supposes the writer heard read in the General Conference, to wit: "*As I was not accessory to the origination or production of the work, (the History and Mystery,) I ought not to have been made accountable for its contents, unless it had been proved that I had professed to believe it certainly true, and had recommended it accordingly.*" Now if L. had founded his assertion upon this passage in Mr. Dorsey's appeal, it would certainly have been a mistake, and a very unpardonable one too. But the fact is, that L. had no allusion to Mr. Dorsey's appeal at all. And this Mr. Dorsey must have known, because L. had stated this declaration of Mr. Dorsey's as one of the charges made against him *at the time of his expulsion*, which of course *preceded* his appeal. Mr. Dorsey could not have forgotten that he had published a pamphlet as well as written an appeal. This pamphlet is entitled, "A Review of an Address, professing to be a Vindication of the Baltimore Annual Conference," &c., and upon the seventeenth page contains the declaration upon which L. founds the assertion of which Mr. Dorsey complains, and for which he has the effrontery to impugn the writer's veracity. "*Furthermore, as no one of the bishops had answered the letters of Mr. M'Caine on the subject, (the History and Mystery,) we really thought he was correct; and as those letters and the work generally contained subjects of the greatest moment to the Church, we were convinced that she should see it and examine for herself.*"

\* Written by Dr. Bond,

The reader will see by the above extract from Mr. Dorsey's pamphlet, that L. was justified in what he charged Mr. Dorsey with saying, in reference to the History and Mystery of Methodist Episcopacy.

The imputation of a want of veracity made against L., the reader will now dispose of as he pleases. But how will Mr. Dorsey atone to *his* readers for the deception he intended to practise upon them? We confess we had heretofore thought Mr. Dorsey rather a dupe than a deceiver. We had been led to think he had been practised upon by those who had less honesty of purpose, but more cunning than himself; but this contemptible trick goes far to change our opinion. It was long since apprehended by those who entertained favourable opinions of Mr. Dorsey, that his intimacy with the author of the History and Mystery, boded no good to his morals; and this pitiful stratagem shows but too clearly that he has been rather too long in bad company.

To the knight who so valorously challenges us to combat, threatening us with the further effects of his ire if we do not prove what we have said in reference to those who were expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church in Baltimore, and whom, though we do not know him with his visor on, we take from his dolorous wailing to be him of the rueful countenance, we beg, with all due and knightly courtesy, to say, we decline his challenge and despise his threats. We have no sort of inclination for works of supererogation. The task he would impose upon us, has been already performed, perhaps much more to the satisfaction of all honest inquirers, than to his own. If, however, he be in earnest in his inquiry, we refer him for all he can reasonably require, to the "Narrative and Defence" of the proceedings he alludes to, published by the brethren who conducted the prosecutions. Let him read, learn, and inwardly digest.

## GENERAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS, 1828.

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THE conciliatory resolutions of the late General Conference, which we republish below, together with the remarks of Dr. Emory, the mover of the resolutions, will be read with interest by all our friends into whose hands they have not heretofore fallen. The grounds upon which the proposals of the Conference have been so indignantly rejected by the expelled and seceding members of our Church, in whose favour they were passed, are perhaps not generally understood; and even the judicious observations of the mover, though they sufficiently set aside the objections which have been made in the *Mutual Rights* by those who rejected them, do not render it superfluous to make further explanations, for the satisfaction of those who are unacquainted with the history of these resolutions.

It is well known that sometime previously to the sitting of the last General Conference, certain local preachers and lay members were expelled from the Church in Baltimore, for having published a number of the most inflammatory papers, in which our brethren of the ministry, both the living and the dead, were most shamefully traduced and calumniated. For these foul calumnies they refused to make any atonement to the injured feelings of their brethren, or any satisfaction to the laws of God, which as imperatively forbid slander and defamation, as they forbid any other vice. When arraigned under the rules of the Church, and called to answer before the authorized judicatories, they not only contemned the authority of these judicatories, but boldly avowed that no Church authority could hold them amenable for what they had done—the cause in which they had embarked was of so much importance, that no restraints ought to be imposed upon them: by all which we could understand neither more nor less than that they were to be permitted to “do evil that good might come of it.” Some refused to make any defence at all, and all declined an appeal to the superior Church judicatories, who possessed an appellate jurisdiction in the premises. Elated with the idea of erecting another Church, the leaders of the party were far from desiring to compromise the matter, or to retain their membership amongst us. The Church in which they had long professed to be so happy, and into which they had all along endeavoured to entice others, had all at once become such a horrid despotism, that “free-born sons of America” could no longer tolerate it; and they called upon all men, good and bad, to watch its pro-



gress with a vigilant eye, lest it should some day overturn the civil liberties of the country, and bind the world with fetters more galling than priestly domination had ever yet forged. The moderate views of some who claimed to be reformers, were little more to the taste of the M'Cainites than the opinions of downright old-side men. Nothing short of a radical upturning and overturning, and a new modelling of the Church after their own fashion, would satisfy them ; for nothing less could ever give them the distinction they coveted. It is only in a *boiling* pot that the sediment rises to the top, "and bubbles dance amidst the foam." In the midst of these open violations of all order and propriety, they, nevertheless, had the shameless effrontery to tell the world in their numerous publications, that they had been expelled the Church, for "dissenting with their brethren on the subject of Church government;" and such were their expectation from the cry of persecution which was set up, that they already imagined the Methodist Episcopal Church was tottering to its fall. A plain "Narrative and Defence" of the proceedings against them, however, set the matter right in the eyes of the public. It was easily shown, by extracts from their own publications, that it was not for their opinions on Church government, which they had long held and might still have held with impunity, but for their violations of all the obligations of Christian charity and Christian fellowship, that their brethren had disowned them ; and the piteous cry of persecution ceased to command the sympathy of any but their satellites.

Notwithstanding the M'Cainites had declined an appeal to all the intermediate judicatories, they nevertheless sent up a memorial to the General Conference, setting forth their grievances, and praying for redress. Let it be remembered, that to this body they had no appeal ; but their complaints against the administration of the presiding elder and preacher in charge, might perhaps be a subject of legitimate investigation before the Conference. Their memorial was respectfully received and read by the Conference, and referred to the committee on the itinerancy.

At this time it was understood that a gentleman who had been deputed by the disaffected and expelled members in Baltimore, together with four other persons then in Pittsburg, was authorized to make certain concessions on the part of the "expelled," provided they might thereby be again received into the Church ; and that their instructions authorized them "to offer any concessions which Christians ought to ask or Christians ought to make." Accordingly these concessions were offered to the committee to whom the memorial had been referred, who deeming them such as ought to be accepted, in the hope of restoring peace and harmony, were about to report favourably, until it was suggested that perhaps one of the concessions proposed did not mean quite as much as it seemed to import : that when it was proposed to discontinue "The Mutual Rights," it was only intended to

alter the *name* of the periodical. The inquiry was made of those who had sent in the propositions ; and although four out of five of the negotiators were, as it was said, of the opinion that the proposition implied the discontinuance of the periodical altogether, and under any form, and that no lasting peace could be effected without such a measure was adopted, yet the dissentient negotiator was of so much consequence that the stipulation could not be made without him. The "committee on the itinerancy," who could not but approve of the proceedings on the part of the Church in Baltimore, were now reluctantly compelled to decline reporting upon the concessions proposed by the representatives of the complainants. No good could grow out of reunion, unless it was to be followed by peace and harmony among those who should be thus united ; and this was not to be expected while a periodical firebrand was to be regularly thrown into the midst of a society already heated by unhappy collisions and contests. It was thought that no lasting union could be effected under the circumstances existing in Baltimore, unless there was a mutual desire for reconciliation ; and this could only be manifested by mutual concessions and sacrifices. On the one side injuries were to be forgiven and confidence restored ; on the other side, there must be acknowledgment and a cessation of hostility ; and as the terms proposed, though they offered some indemnity for the past, yet afforded no security for the future, it was deemed inexpedient to impose upon the Church in Baltimore any necessity to receive again those who had been expelled, or who had withdrawn in consequence of such expulsions. The committee on the itinerancy did not, therefore, feel authorized to base upon the concessions made by the representatives of the complainants any terms of pacification.

The hope of peace and reconciliation, however, was not abandoned ; and Dr. Emory, after consulting with the representatives of the complainants and the preacher in charge of the Baltimore station, submitted to the Conference the resolutions which are published below. Let it be distinctly understood, that the concessions and acknowledgments required by the resolutions, were none other than those which had been offered in the first instance to the committee on the itinerancy, except as regards the discontinuance of the "Mutual Rights ;" and even here they only make that clear and explicit, which was before acknowledged to be fairly implied—namely, that by the proposition to discontinue the "Mutual Rights," the negotiators did not mean that the *name* of the periodical should be changed, but that the paper itself should no longer be published. Why one of the brethren engaged in the negotiation, refused to make the proposition thus explicit, after the ambiguity was pointed out, while he was understood to admit that it was the meaning they were originally intended to convey, it was impossible at that time to divine ; and, although it can be easily accounted for now, the subject is too delicate for

further remark. It will be seen by the preamble to the resolutions, that they were passed with the "hope" that there existed a mutual desire for peace and reconciliation. This hope was authorized by the mild and amiable deportment of those who had been selected as the representatives of the expelled members, and by the readiness of the preacher in charge of Baltimore City station, to accept the terms of the compromise as far as he was concerned, or could sanction them. Dr. Emory remarked, when he presented the resolutions, that they were the result of much consultation with those interested upon both sides of the question; that he had not only the approbation of those who had been considered as the friends of the expelled members, but of the Rev. Mr. Hanson, who had presided during the trial, and who was still in charge of the station where the expulsions had taken place, and also of a member of the Baltimore quarterly-meeting conference, known to be present. The resolutions passed almost unanimously, Mr. Hanson and all the delegation of the Baltimore Conference voting for them. No doubt was entertained of the acceptance of the terms proposed by the resolutions, but what arose from an opinion still entertained by some, that reconciliation with the Church was not really desired on the part of the expelled members; and this opinion was but too faithfully corroborated by the result. They were rejected by the Union Society in Baltimore, with indignation and contempt. The authority of those who made the stipulations for the expelled members was disavowed by the leaders of the party in Baltimore, and they continued to assail the Church with the bitterest revilings, and to reiterate the outcry of persecution and tyranny.

It was objected by some, that conditions quite as favourable, and even more so, had been offered them before they were expelled; and this was very true. But it was also true, that it was known when they refused those terms before their expulsion, they were under the infatuated notion, that the Church authorities would not dare to proceed to extremities with them. They did not believe their brethren of the ministry, or of the laity, would have nerve enough to risk the consequences of expelling men of their rank and consequence. Having found themselves mistaken, and moreover, having seen that their complaints had ceased to make the impression which they at first made upon the public, it was hoped they were brought to better temper, and the propositions of their friends at the General Conference confirmed this opinion. The Church in Baltimore, however, no longer had it in their power to propose such favourable conditions. Those who had been expelled could only return under the provisions of the Discipline, which require at least six months as the term of probation. Some act of the General Conference was therefore necessary, to enable the preacher in charge to receive the laymen into full membership, and the local preachers with all their ministerial privileges,

without subjecting them to the usual probation ; and this authority was afforded by the resolutions to which we have alluded.

It has been objected to the resolutions that they ought to have been imperative with respect to the reception, by the quarterly-meeting conference and preacher in charge, of the expelled members, upon compliance with the conditions proposed. But it would have been obviously wrong to have made measures imperative upon one side, while no authority could be exercised or claimed over the other. It was, moreover, explicitly stated in the preamble, that the resolutions were passed with a view to enable the Church authorities in Baltimore to fulfil intentions of kindness already entertained by them towards those they had been under the necessity of expelling. It was not the design of the General Conference to compel a reunion, if there existed a repugnance to the measure on either side ; because such an union would have been a source of endless strife and contention, instead of promoting peace. Moreover, it would have been manifestly improper for the General Conference to have taken the expelled members into the Church by an imperative and unconditional order to the stationed preacher, because that body could not know the moral standing of all of them. Some might, for aught that was known by the Conference to the contrary, be living in open sin—it was, therefore, highly necessary to leave their admission to the sound discretion of the official members of the station.

After all, perhaps the true cause of the rejection of the terms proposed by the Conference, remains to be told. While the negotiations were progressing at Conference, as above detailed, an under-plot was going on, under the management of the representative sent by the expelled members immediately from Baltimore. This was to induce the bishops, upon the readmission of the expelled members and seceders, to set them off as a separate charge and appoint them a minister. This would have afforded them a safe lodgment within the citadel itself, from which they might annoy the Church with perfect impunity. No discipline could possibly be brought to bear upon them, whatever means they might employ to carry on their plans of reform. They might then slander and defame all who were opposed to them without the possibility of incurring either Church censure or expulsion. Whoever the pastor of the Church might have been, he would have found his hands completely tied, notwithstanding the despotic authority which has been attributed to travelling preachers. They could only be tried by one another ultimately, even had the preacher sought a committee from a neighbouring circuit or station, as they would have constituted a quarterly-meeting conference, who would necessarily have had an appellate jurisdiction in all cases whatsoever. This was the boon for which they were willing to make concessions. The boon was not granted, and could not with propriety or even safety be granted ; and

without it, membership in the Church was not desirable. In any other relation they would not be permitted to carry on hostilities against their brethren.

We cannot help feeling mortified at this attempt upon the part of our opponents, because it argues a great contempt for the understanding of those to whom the application was made, to suppose they could be imposed upon by so shallow an artifice. Was it thought possible that the execution of discipline could be committed to those who were known to be irreconcilably opposed to its provisions? Was it not known that the reformers in Baltimore were nearly all opposed to class-meeting as a term of membership? And had not the Mutual Rights teemed with invectives against the rule of discipline which forbids local preachers to retail spirituous liquors? To say nothing, then, of the right claimed by them to write and publish whatever they pleased, however slanderous and defamatory, so it was calculated to aid their schemes of reform, how could it be expected that a society, composed exclusively of such materials, should assist the pastor in enforcing the regulations to which we have alluded above?

By the rejection of the terms proposed by themselves through their representatives, all the kind intentions of the Conference towards their expelled brethren have been frustrated, and the labours of love, into which the amiable mover of the resolutions entered so ardently, have failed to effect the good he designed to do; but neither can lose their reward. Although those for whom the benefit was designed have returned them evil for good, yet their reward is sure; for the blessing of the peace maker will unquestionably be accorded to all who endeavour to make peace, however unsuccessfully the effort may eventuate.

#### RESOLUTIONS OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE, ALLUDED TO ABOVE.

"WHEREAS an unhappy excitement has existed in some parts of our work, in consequence of the organization of what have been called 'Union Societies,' for purposes and under regulations believed to be inconsistent with the peace and harmony of the Church; and in relation to the character of much of the matter contained in a certain periodical publication, called 'Mutual Rights,' in regard to which certain expulsions from the Church have taken place; and whereas this General Conference indulges a hope that a mutual desire may exist for conciliation and peace, and is desirous of leaving open a way for the accomplishment of so desirable an object, on safe and equitable principles, therefore,

"*Resolved*, 1. That in view of the premises, and in the earnest hope that this measure may tend to promote this object, this General Conference affectionately advises that no further proceedings may be had in any

part of our work against any minister or member of the Methodist Episcopal Church, on account of any past agency or concern in relation to the above-named periodical, or in relation to any Union Society as above mentioned.

"2. If any persons expelled as aforesaid, feel free to concede that publications have appeared in said 'Mutual Rights,' the nature and character of which were unjustifiably inflammatory, and do not admit of vindication; and that others, though for want of proper information, or unintentionally, have yet, in fact, misrepresented individuals and facts, and that they regret these things; if it be voluntarily agreed, also, that the Union Societies, above alluded to, shall be abolished, and the periodical called 'Mutual Rights' be discontinued at the close of the current volume, which shall be completed with due respect to the conciliatory and pacific design of this arrangement, then this General Conference does hereby give authority for the restoration to their ministry or membership respectively, in the Methodist Episcopal Church, of any person or persons so expelled as aforesaid, provided this arrangement shall be mutually assented to by any individual or individuals so expelled, and also by the quarterly-meeting conference, and the minister or preacher having the charge in any circuit or station within which any such expulsion may have taken place; and that no such minister or preacher shall be obliged, under this arrangement, to restore any such individual as leader of any class or classes, unless in his own discretion he shall judge it proper so to do; and provided, also, that it be further mutually agreed, that no other *periodical* publication, to be devoted to the same controversy, shall be established on either side; it being expressly understood, at the same time, that this, if agreed to, will be on the ground, not of any assumption of right to require this, but of mutual consent, for the restoration of peace; and that no individual will be hereby precluded from issuing any publication which he may judge proper on his own responsibility. It is further understood, that any individual or individuals who may have withdrawn from the Methodist Episcopal Church, on account of any proceedings in relation to the premises, may also be restored, by mutual consent, under this arrangement, on the same principles as above stated."

#### REMARKS BY THE MOVER OF THE RESOLUTIONS.

"THE above resolutions were founded on the supposition of a '*mutual desire*' for 'coalition and peace.' On any other supposition they would neither have been proposed nor passed. The expelled persons in Baltimore, either having not obeyed the citations of the Church to appear before inferior judicatories, or having not availed themselves of the intermediate appellate judicatories, for the redress of alleged grievances, were

not entitled to come before the General Conference either as appellants or complainants. From the representation of individuals desirous of effecting a compromise, that body, nevertheless, consented to depart from a regular course, in order to leave open a door for general pacification, and for the restoration of the expelled persons, on certain conditions, *by mutual consent*. It was never intended to force them upon the society in Baltimore without consent—for this, instead of effecting peace, would only have been renewing and increasing discord. The expelled persons, by their own voluntary acts, had precluded themselves from all right to demand this; and to have done so would, moreover, have been manifestly unjust to the society in Baltimore, over which the General Conference had jurisdiction, but none whatever over the expelled persons. What respect would have been paid by the latter to any *positive* resolutions of the General Conference, if not exactly conformed to their wishes, may be inferred from the contempt with which they have rejected those which were passed in an intended milder form.

“It was never the design of those resolutions to lay a snare for the expelled persons, by requiring them first to make the concessions stated, and then to subject them to the mortification of being nevertheless rejected by the quarterly-meeting conference and the preacher in charge. This has been insinuated; but it is an insinuation which does great injustice both to the mover and to the supporters of the resolutions. It was openly stated on the floor of the General Conference, that the preacher in charge of the Baltimore City station *did*, and *would*, concur in the resolutions, and would acquiesce, on his part, in the restoration of the expelled persons, if the resolutions should be accepted on their part. This was stated in the presence of the preacher in charge of that station and also to several of the friends and agents of the expelled persons, by whom it was presumed it would be communicated. There was good reason to believe also, from the best information possessed, that they would be concurred in by the quarterly-meeting conference of Baltimore on the recommendation of the General Conference. And, at all events, if they had been concurred in by the expelled persons and yet rejected by the quarterly-meeting conference or by the preacher in charge, such a state of things could not have failed to give the former a great advantage, both before the Church and the world. Had a real desire of peace and reunion existed, nothing would have been easier than to ascertain whether, if the basis proposed by the General Conference should be accepted by them, such an union would be effected. And this could easily have been done without actually making the concessions required till this fact had been ascertained. As to the preacher in charge, it had been already ascertained and stated. But the truth is, when a measure is not desired there is nothing easier than to make objections to it.

"The resolutions were purposely deferred till towards the close of the Conference in order to obtain the fullest information and to make them as unexceptionable as practicable to all parties. Several friends of the expelled persons, who were in Pittsburg at the time of proposing the resolutions, were consulted respecting them. Some modifications were made at their instance; and, as to the form and extent of the concessions to be made, they were copied, nearly verbatim, from a written paper furnished for the purpose by a member of the General Conference, who was understood to be a particular friend of the expelled persons. The chief alteration made in it was to *abridge* and *soften* some of its expressions. In that paper the proposed concession is *positive*—not only that publications "*may*" have appeared, but that *many* publications *have* appeared in "*Mutual Rights*," the nature and character of which were inflammatory and do not admit of vindication, "and that this was regretted and deplored." The original is now in the possession of the mover of the resolutions, and was used by him in drawing them. The paper is marked "inofficial," and was to be so considered. Yet it was stated at the same time, by the individual above alluded to, in the presence of several concerned, that there was sufficient authority to believe that the concession above mentioned, in the positive form and to the extent stated, would be agreed to. The mover of the resolutions is compelled to make this statement in self-defence.

"It has been asserted that 'the resolutions provide that no further discussion shall be had on the subject.' If the reader will look over the resolutions he may convince himself that there is no such provision in them, nor anything which amounts to it."

The expelled persons themselves, as a measure of "*conciliation*," proposed to discontinue the "*Mutual Rights*," at the close of the current volume. But it seems now that they had a private design, at the same time, to establish in its place another periodical, (to be devoted to the same controversy,) under *another name*, and to be published *weekly* instead of monthly. How far this would have been likely to promote "*conciliation*" the reader must judge.

The General Conference proposed that, *by mutual consent*, no *periodical* publication, to be devoted to the existing controversy, should be carried on by either side; for proposals had actually been issued, in Baltimore, for such a publication in vindication of the Church as well as on the other side. This proposal was not from any unwillingness to meet such a discussion, either periodically or otherwise, and certainly not with intention to provide that "no further discussion should be had on the subject." The object was to lay a ground for a sincere reunion, in affection and good feeling, as well as in form, which it was believed, in the existing excitement, could not be effected if such a *periodical* controversy should be continued. It was expressly stated that individuals would be at liberty even if the above



conciliatory arrangement should be mutually agreed to, to publish what they might think proper on their individual responsibility. It has been objected that this meant on their individual "peril." Be it so. And so it ought to be. And no man should be unwilling to bear his own burden.

It has been objected also that the resolutions left the "odious gag-law" unrepealed. Now the rule thus styled means nothing more than that persons shall not avail themselves of a place in the bosom of the Church to "*endeavour to sow dissensions by inveighing* against our doctrines or discipline, in the sense of *unchristian railing* and violence." So the General Conference have declared, and that no other construction of the rule will be sanctioned. It seems, then, that the expelled persons wish the privilege of being in the Church, to endeavour to sow dissensions, by "unchristian railing." In any other view their return to the Church, as it now appears, could not be of much consequence to them; for they maintain that it would puzzle even ecclesiastical lawyers and doctors to prove that it is "an iniquitous act to withdraw from the Methodist Episcopal Church," and that their return was not so much "for any personal consideration," because individuals among them, who understand the importance of the question, "will be found," they say, "generally, perhaps in every instance, to have within their reach resources sufficient for their own personal comfort." They wished to be regarded as the offended, not the offending party. That the General Conference thought otherwise, is now pretended to be considered a great insult. Their eye was fixed more upon doing the *Church* service, by giving the General Conference an opportunity to wipe off, not *their* disgrace, but the disgrace of the *Church*, and to restore them in spite of "Hanson" and "the quarterly-meeting conference," who "were known," they say, "to be the most offensive to them of any men." All this, it seems, they would have considered very "respectful" and "conciliatory." And when all this should have been done, with the abolition of the "odious gag-law," and license given to rail and to endeavour to sow dissensions without restraint, the General Conference might, perhaps, have been as liberally lauded as it is now abused, especially if they had been constituted, as was proposed, a *separate charge* in Baltimore City, where they could have operated as a thorn, not in its side only, but in its heart. All this has opened our eyes. And so long as such a spirit is perceived to exist as those gentlemen continue to exhibit, the mover of the resolutions is as well satisfied with their fate as those of the expelled persons can be by whom they have been rejected.

It seems that both those who have been *expelled* and those who have *withdrawn*, still insist on *reforming* the Church of which they are no longer members. Not because they "tax either preachers or people with want of piety or zeal," but, on the contrary, "give them ample credit for their

usefulness, morality, and holiness :” not because they “ declaim against the Methodist doctrine as incomprehensible, irrational, and antichristian,” but “ embrace it in all its parts as consistent and scriptural :” not because they “ desire to cause secessions and divisions,” (although they, in effect, invite and exult in them,\*) but these gentlemen seem still to consider it a most intolerable grievance, that, after all their declamation, ninety-nine hundredths, or more, of the whole body of Methodists, preachers and people, continue stupidly and obstinately insensible of the outrageous tyranny by which they are ground and oppressed, and will not be convinced that if our reformers had a hand in the management of matters they would very speedily redress their wrongs and terminate their sufferings.

In conclusion, we will submit two questions only to the candid and the conscientious. 1. Are there not in the world false doctrines and wicked practices enough to employ the time and talents of our reforming brethren, without wasting their strength on the “ polity ” of the Methodist Episcopal Church, even admitting that it may not be exactly what they wish it to be ? 2. And can it be a commendable work of Christian piety, for such cause, or in retaliation for supposed wrongs, to endeavour to spread and foment disaffection and dissatisfaction among those who at present may be peaceful and satisfied, in a Church admitted to be sound in doctrine and holy in discipline ? If human passions be consulted, we know the answer. If, on the contrary, we consult conscience and the divine word, with an eye to eternity, it may be different.

\* “ Fifty-two persons,” they say, “ lately joined, nearly all members of the Methodist Episcopal Church, and most of them of very long standing ; many more are preparing to follow their example.” These are some of the first-fruits of *Union Societies*, instituted, as we have been told, to *prevent* secessions.

## MR. STILWELL'S LETTER.

MR. EDITOR,—In the twentieth number of the Mutual Rights, there is a letter from Mr. Stilwell, of New-York, which contains some important information. Mr. Stilwell commences by complaining of “the assertion,” which, he says, is “made by the enemies of reform in the Methodist Episcopal Church, that secessions from this Church never prosper.” This Mr. Stilwell is a seceder from our Church, and adduces the success of his own party in contradiction of the assertion to which he alludes. Let us see how the account which he himself gives of the secession he effected, bears upon the question.

He tells us, then, that the secession took place in 1820, in the city of New-York, and is still in existence; that he has received since that period fourteen hundred persons, either as members or upon probation; but that two Churches have separated from him since the formation of the society, and that from this and other causes, his society has been *reduced* from fourteen hundred to “upwards of five hundred members.” What a conclusive proof of the prosperity and success of the seceders! He tells us, moreover, that his society was not represented in the Baltimore Convention. “The ministers, whose names were printed as delegates from the society in New-York, belonged, not to that society, but were members of a body *once* in connexion with them.” All these ministers then, and how many more he does not say, have *seceded* from the *seceders* since they formed “The Methodist Society in New-York,” besides two whole Churches in the city itself! Why, this is worse than the wonderful exploit of the King of Spain, who

“With forty thousand men  
Marched up the hill and then marched down again!”

Mr. Stilwell and his associates don't march *together* either up or down, but, severally, wheel to the right or left as inclination suggests, and march to all the different points of the compass.

Mr. Stilwell says, “our Discipline has not been altered since first formed.” A discipline has, however, been since made and published, claiming to be the discipline “of the Methodist Society,” as agreed upon by a convention held by delegates from the society, convened from different parts of the United States. We would not be troublesome to Mr. Stilwell, but it would be satisfactory to know why he did not attend that convention, which met in the city of New-York, his place of residence; and which was charged with the great interests of the seceding societies

from the Methodist Episcopal Church. We are the more desirous to have some explanation of this matter from Mr. Stilwell himself, because we have heard it intimated that he was prevented from attending the convention by the known prevalence of the disposition among its members to establish a regular itinerant system of ministerial labour. He was supposed to be too *comfortably fixed* in New-York, to be willing to submit to the necessary *rotation* which such a system would require. He was willing to let those itinerate who could do no better. We thank him for his letter, however. It exhibits a perspicuous view of the materials of which secessions from the Methodist Episcopal Church are usually formed, and affords some important facts to aid us in forming an opinion as to their final result.

TRUTH ALWAYS SAFE.

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MR. EDITOR,—Vindicator, in the last number of the *Mutual Rights*, has undertaken to show that the persons expelled from our Church in Baltimore, were condemned for being members of the Union Society, and for uttering and publishing their sentiments on Church government. He promises to sustain these allegations, by quotations from the charges preferred against them, as published in the “*Narrative and Defence of the proceedings.*”

In these quotations, however, the *charges* are left out entirely, and only one of the specifications and a part of another are given—which taken separately, suited his purpose; but which quoted entire and taken in connexion with the charges, proves directly the contrary to that which he had asserted. This practice of garbling documents is an old trick with our reformers; and it is one which, if allowed, would enable an atheist to prove his opinions from the Bible. The charges and specifications may be found in the *Narrative and Defence*, and the reader may see what reliance is to be placed upon Vindicator’s quotations.

The reader will see, moreover, that membership in the Union Society, was not the ground of complaint against those who were expelled; *but the acts and doings of that society, in which they participated by their agents, the editorial committee.* A Union Society might have been as harmless and inoffensive as any other association, and therefore membership in it could only become culpable by its acts and proceedings. It is true that the first specification by which the charges are sustained, alleges that the accused were members of the Union Society of Baltimore, because it was necessary to show that fact, in order to their being held responsible for the acts of that society; but the second specification points directly to the particular offences of which, as members of the Union Society, the accused had been guilty. To show that membership in a Union Society was not the ground of complaint against Vindicator’s friends, we may remark, that the allegations made against them could not have been made and sustained against the members of any other Union Society in the world; because none other participated in the election of the “*editorial committee*” who published the *Mutual Rights*, and therefore could not be held accountable for the inflammatory and slanderous papers contained in that periodical.

Vindicator alleges that his friends were expelled for publishing their sentiments upon Church government, because the second specification

alleges that they published the Mutual Rights, which he would fain have his readers think was simply a work upon Church government. But if the reader will take the pains to read the whole of this specification, he will find that a very different character is given to this periodical; and if he will, moreover, look at the essays pointed to as proving its character, he will find the allegation amply sustained. We admit that the accused were expelled for publishing certain papers in the Mutual Rights; but the charges and specifications show, at the same time, that the objection to these papers was, not that they contained opinions upon Church government, or that these opinions were erroneous, but to the personal invectives and misrepresentation they contained.

The letter of Mr. Hanson, to which Vindicator refers in support of his position, not only requires as a condition upon which those who had been found guilty should avoid the penalty of expulsion from the communion of the Church, that they should withdraw from the Union Society, and thereby show their individual disapprobation of its proceedings, but also required that they should "in future withhold their aid from such publications and measures as are likely to cast reproach upon our ministers, and produce a breach of union among our members." Mr. Hanson's letter, therefore, does not afford Vindicator any support whatever, but on the contrary is greatly against him; and as the propositions of Dr. Green and Dr. Bond, they were only propositions of compromise, in which neither the culpability nor innocence of those to whom they were addressed could with propriety be assumed, and therefore can have no bearing whatever upon the question now at issue.

As to some other authorities referred to by Vindicator, he must pardon us if we do not admit their validity. Their evidence could not invalidate the documentary proof to which we have access, even if they were impartial; but when we consider the part they have taken in the matter under consideration—that they are parties in the affair—we hope we shall not be thought very uncivil if we neither admit them as witnesses nor as umpires in the dispute.

We now cheerfully submit the whole matter to our readers. We have not deemed it necessary to say a word in reply to the personal allusions and imputations which Vindicator has allowed himself to indulge in, because they really have nothing to do with the subject in dispute. If Vindicator was so conscious of the untenable ground he occupied, as to deem it necessary to divert his readers from the subject of controversy, by abusing his opponent, we have no occasion for such stratagems, and have not resorted to them. For any further information which the reader may desire, we again refer to the Narrative and Defence of the proceedings in the premises—only we admonish the inquirer to read for himself, and not to rely upon Vindicator's quotations.

The editor of the *Mutual Rights*, some time since, made an unchristian attack upon the character of L.,\* whose real name, he professes to know,—giving his readers to understand that the person who assumed that signature has no regard for truth. He founds his allegation upon L.'s assertion, that Mr. Dorsey† had circulated the "*History and Mystery*," declaring that he believed it to be true; and he very charitably supposes that the assertion was founded upon his Appeal to the General Conference, where L. was present, and which Appeal contains no such declaration.

In reply, we informed Mr. Dorsey that our assertion was not based upon his Appeal at all, but upon a pamphlet which he published before his Appeal was read or written. In proof of this we quoted, from the afore-said pamphlet, the sentence which contained the declaration upon which our assertion was founded; and, moreover, showed that having alleged his circulating the *History and Mystery*, together with his declaration of credence in the statements therein contained, to be one of the causes of his expulsion from the Church, we could not have alluded to his Appeal to the General Conference, which was not and could not have been presented until after his expulsion.

Mr. Dorsey, in reply, does not deny the correctness of our quotation from his pamphlet, and yet he has not the magnanimity to take back his shameless imputation upon our veracity. He persists that our assertion was at first hazarded from a mistaken apprehension of the language of his Appeal, and that the quotation from his pamphlet was subsequently hunted up to sustain our *veracity*. And why does Mr. Dorsey believe this? Because we were, he says, at the General Conference. What then? Why, being at the General Conference, we must have heard his Appeal, and must have misunderstood it, or wilfully misrepresented it. Yet he will not allow that we had any recollection of his pamphlet at all, although it was published and circulated in this city,—where, if Mr. Dorsey be rightly informed, we did then, and do now reside. But this is not all. If Mr. Dorsey be right in his conjectures as to the real name of L., of which he intimates he has proof, he knows there are special reasons why we should have read and recollected his pamphlet, as the person to whom he alludes was one of a committee who reported the resolutions and address to which Mr. Dorsey's pamphlet professed to be a reply.

But Mr. Dorsey thinks that circulating the *History and Mystery*, "believing the author was correct," is a very different thing from circulating the work "believing it to be true." What he means by this—unless he thought the author "correct" in publishing what was *not true*, because "none of the bishops had answered his letters,"—we confess we are at a loss to imagine. We think the declaration in the pamphlet

\* One of the signatures of Dr. Bond. † Rev. Dennis B. Dorsey, one of the expelled.

not only implies that Mr. Dorsey thought the "History and Mystery" to be true, (as he now admits that he did,) but that the author was "correct" in publishing those truths, notwithstanding the personal injury they were calculated to do, because the exposure was necessary for the good of the Church. If Mr. Dorsey, however, insists that a man may be "correct" in publishing what is not true, although the publication be calculated to wound the feelings and injure the character of his brethren, we should deem it useless to contend with him. Such morals may, for aught we know, belong to a new code, which is to be brought in with the other blessings of the wonderful reformation in which he is engaged.

Mr. Dorsey, however, fairly acknowledges that he "certainly did believe the History and Mystery to be true," although, for certain reasons which he does not think fit to communicate, he "neither avowed nor intended to avow such a belief in his pamphlet." And this is the man who told the Conference that he "would not suffer any man or set of men to trammel his rational faculties in their search after truth;" and apprized them that he "should take the liberty of promulgating his opinions in any manner he thought proper!" After this, we had not expected an avowal that he had been restrained by any personal considerations from avowing his opinions, especially in a matter which he deemed so important to the interests of the Church.

To conclude: If Mr. Dorsey believes that our assertion, that he circulated the History and Mystery, declaring he believed it to be true, and that this was one of the charges made against him at the time of his expulsion, rested upon a mistaken apprehension of the language of his Appeal, or a wilful misrepresentation of it—notwithstanding our assurances to the contrary, accompanied with a quotation from his pamphlet, showing the ground of our assertion; and, in fact, notwithstanding the utter impossibility of alleging the language of his Appeal as the ground of accusation against him at his trial, which preceded his Appeal: if, moreover, he believed the History and Mystery, to be true, as he now *unequivocally* says he did; if he believed, as the author of that work asserts, that Mr. Asbury and Dr. Coke presented an address to George Washington, president of congress—although he never was president of congress at any time—that this address was presented in 1785, although in the body of the address the bishops speak of the constitution of the United States, which was not adopted until 1788; and congratulate General Washington upon his election to the presidency of the United States; and although the president, in his reply, returns his acknowledgments for their congratulations on his election, which did not take place until 1789; that Mr. Asbury, the doctor, or some person for them, altered the date of his address, from 1785 to 1789; that they took the name of bishops for the first time on this occasion, in order to appear before so august a personage in their best



dress—although the appellation of bishop was not, in fact, applied to the superintendents until some time afterwards ; we say, if Mr. Dorsey can believe all this, we cannot conceive of a more useless and unnecessary work in which “any man, or body of men,” could engage, than in endeavouring to “trammel” such a man’s rational faculties.

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#### THE TRUE STATE OF THE CASE.

MR. EDITOR,—Mr. Dorsey, in the last number of the *Mutual Rights*, declines further altercation with L., unless he will give his real name ; and yet Mr. D. had ventured formerly to intimate that he knew the real name of the author. Besides, it was against L., under his assumed signature, that Mr. Dorsey made his allegations, and against whom he was bound to sustain them, or acknowledge his error. Our readers will perceive that he has done neither the one nor the other ; but in *backing out*, he assures his readers that his retreat is not to be attributed to “pusillanimity,” but to the advice of his friends, who seem at length to have convinced him that prudence is the better part of valour.

To cover his retreat, however, Mr. D. ventures, in the face of all the facts in the case, to tell his readers that L. does not deny the principal facts on which his shameless imputation against our veracity was founded. Now we did and do deny, that we had mistaken the language of his Appeal to the General Conference, or that we had predicated what we had said in reference to him upon that Appeal at all ; nay, we proved that it was impossible that we could have done so. And these were the principal facts, and the only facts, which he had alleged in the note of which we complained, and in which he gave his readers to understand that our veracity was not to be relied upon. We did, moreover, quote a passage from a pamphlet, published by Mr. D., long before his Appeal was presented to the General Conference, by which all that we had said in reference to his circulating the *History and Mystery* was fully sustained ; and yet he tells his readers we have not denied “*the principal facts*” upon which his cruel and unchristian aspersion of our character was founded.

It is, however, some consolation to perceive that Mr. D. feels ashamed of his conduct ; and that his friends who have advised him to retreat, are also mortified on his account. We hope he will not suppress the emotion : “where there is yet shame, there may in time be virtue.”

## A WORD TO "NATHAN."

MR. EDITOR,—The "review of the conventional articles" has greatly exasperated a writer in the Mutual Rights who assumes the signature of "Nathan." He does not attempt to defend the articles, however, but consoles himself with the prospect of remedying their defects by the aid we have afforded, and by "the more safe and certain light of practical experience."

We confess we are gratified by the intimation, that our radical brethren mean at length to listen to the sober dictates of "practical experience." It was precisely to this test that we have always appealed in favour of the institutions of Methodism; and we may yet indulge a hope, that when our quondam friends shall turn away from the ignis fatuus of abstract metaphysical speculation, and take for their guide "the more safe and certain light of practical experience," they may be reconducted to the altars of that Church in which the writer says, "Many of them have expended their youthful blood—have been hewers of wood and drawers of water—have cheerfully shared in her reproaches as well as partaken of her spiritual advantages;—in a word, have grown gray in the service of God." We hope they may again find from "practical experience," the institutions of the Church from which they have so causelessly separated, "owned and blessed," as he says they have heretofore been, "to their own salvation, as well as many of their families."

But Nathan is very angry with us for having "denounced" him as one of the late convention, "as an enemy of that Church in whose communion he had spent upwards of twenty-two years." Now this is very fastidious, to say the least of it. He was one of the convention, and yet will not allow us to consider him an enemy of our Church! Pray, were they our *friends* who adopted the preamble to the conventional articles, and the "reply" to the report of the committee on petitions and memorials adopted by the late General Conference? If these were our *friends*, we are at a loss to know what our enemies would have done.

But *friend* Nathan charges us with "speaking evil of ministers as well as of laymen," because we said, "Our enemies have imagined a vain thing. They have set themselves to destroy the work of the Lord—a work he had owned and blessed to the salvation of thousands." To this charge we confidently plead not guilty, because we believe the allegation to be true; and to speak that which is true is not EVIL-SPEAKING, however severe it may be. EVIL-SPEAKING, according to the definitions of the

word by the best lexicographers, means "slander," "defamation," "calumny;" and truth cannot come within any of these definitions.

We had endeavoured to show in the Review, that the innovations so strenuously insisted upon, would, if adopted, gradually sap the foundations, and ultimately overthrow the whole system of itinerant ministration instituted by Mr. Wesley, and perpetuated by his successors. This system we believed, and do still believe, to be the "work of the Lord." We think it is not the work of human contrivance or premeditation, but that Mr. Wesley was led to its institution, as well as to those prudential regulations by which it has been sustained and rendered so abundantly successful in spreading Scripture holiness over these and other lands, by Providential direction. Nay, that Mr. Wesley not only did not originally design such a plan of operation, but that he was overruled and brought to its adoption, contrary to all the prejudices of his education. We do not mean to say that the plan of operation pursued by the Methodists is *exclusively* the work of the Lord. Many other denominations of Christians, no doubt, have their portion of work assigned them by the Lord of the vineyard; and we hope they will industriously and successfully occupy until HE COME. We only contend, that the itinerant system is the *calling* of the Methodists; and that the Lord has owned and blessed them in the exercise of this calling, and made them the instruments of salvation to thousands.

Now, it is this work which we said our enemies had set themselves to destroy. And that they would have destroyed it root and branch, had they been permitted to reform the Church after their fashion, is not now a matter of speculation. The system they have adopted for themselves, and which they tell us they had designed for our Church government, is so absurd and incongruous as to find no advocates even among themselves. We could not have maintained our itinerant operations under such a system for a single year. A succession of revolutionary schemes would have agitated us from the centre to the circumference of the connexion, and have made us a prey to every enemy.

But we have not charged the convention with setting themselves to destroy what *they believed* to be the work of the Lord. They may have considered the system which we deem the work of the Lord as the invention of men—perhaps a plan which was "*surreptitiously*" introduced by "overbearing, abandoned tyrants,"—and if so, that the devil had a hand in it; and, therefore, by destroying it they were doing God service. Perhaps they did not *intend* to destroy it at all—notwithstanding their measures tended so inevitably to such a result. Wiser men have done infinite mischief while they were actuated by the best motives. If they meant well, we hope they will find mercy, seeing that the evil was done "ignorantly in unbelief."

As to our friend's threat of making his appeal to the more unprejudiced judgment of other denominations, we understand him. He knows, as well as we do, that there have always been among other denominations of Christians those who were jealous and envious of the success of the Methodists—those whose sectarianism restrained their charity within the limits of their own communion; and who, therefore, advocated the cause of our opponents, not because they approve either their creed or their notions of Church government, but because they hope to see us crippled by the *strife*, and our success impeded by the *division*, which has grown out of the controversy. We rejoice, however, in the belief, that the great majority of our brethren who differ with us in some unessential doctrines, and in forms of Church government, consider us useful auxiliaries in the common cause, and wish success to the efforts we are making to promote the great interests of religion. The day of sectarian feeling is passing away. Those who love Christianity for its own sake, rejoice to see it spreading over the world, whoever may be the instruments of its extension. All such, in whatever community of professors they may be found, only contend with us who shall do and suffer most in the cause of truth and righteousness, and we have good reason to believe, are greatly grieved at the useless and unnecessary family feud which has been awakened up in our Church. The *mere sectaries* we have found, and expect still to find, aiding and abetting our enemies, and uniting with them to hinder our success. But we have found, and still look to find, sympathy and encouragement among those whose zeal for the salvation of men carries them beyond the narrow limits of sectarian interests and prejudices.

But "Nathan" is not content with the judgment he anticipates from our Christian brethren—he threatens us with an accusation at a more awful tribunal; even at the final judgment, he and the other members of the convention, in fearful array, are to be our accusers, for having reviewed and exposed the defects of their conventional articles. It has been well said by a great man, that "there is but one step between the sublime and the ridiculous." The members of the convention may perhaps have matters of more importance upon their hands in the day in which they shall be called to give an account of their stewardship. Perhaps they may be called to give an account for having rended the body of Christ, and turned the simple out of the way. The precious souls who may be lost in the fierce contention they have created and continue to perpetuate with so much zeal, may be required at their hands. Charity obliges us to hope that they did not design the evil they have done, and that, therefore, the sin will not be laid to their charge; or if they did design it, that some instrument of heavenly mercy may be as successful in bringing them to repentance, as Nathan's namesake was in awakening the king of Israel to a sense of his iniquity.

## WHO ARE THE PERSECUTED?

MR. EDITOR,—Our opponents have been greatly aided in effecting their designs by the cry of persecution, which they have raised and sounded so long and loud against our Church. Many, it is feared, have had their sympathies enlisted by the cry, and without stopping to inquire into the justice of the complaint, have been led to take part with the supposed sufferers. It may be worth while, however, to inquire whether the Church has not been persecuted, instead of those whom she has been compelled to separate from her communion, or who, after inflicting a thousand wounds, have abandoned her altars; because if this should turn out to be the fact, the complainants will, instead of being entitled to the public sympathy, deserve reprehension as persecutors of their brethren.

The true statement of the case is then as follows:—Certain ministers and members of our Church take it into their heads to *reform* our Church after a fashion of their own—to revolutionize our whole ecclesiastical economy. To effect this object, they set up a printing-press, and issue a periodical teeming with abuse against their brethren. The institutions of the Church, under which we have prospered so long, are assailed with most unchristian violence, and the ministry denounced with the most odious epithets. Our beloved pastors, endeared to us by their labours of love, their sacrifices and their success in spreading the gospel with all its attending influences and blessings, are held up to public odium as tyrants, “overbearing, abandoned, infamous tyrants;” as ambitious despots, dangerous to the public safety; as “forging fetters for us and our posterity;” as men who “would rather see their flocks go into sin and finally into hell, than grant them their rights;” as using the basest stratagems—caucusing, electioneering, and manœuvring all over the continent, to preserve a power which was at first obtained by fraud, falsehood, and cunning craftiness; as being “wolves with teeth and claws,” and not disinclined to use them against the innocent, harmless flock. This is a very brief summary of what they published and circulated, with a zeal and industry as cruel as it was unrelenting. If any man doubt it, let him read the “Wesleyan Repository” and the “Mutual Rights;” or, if he has not time to wade through these volumes, let him examine the extracts given in the “Narrative and Defence” of the proceedings of the Church in Baltimore; and if he be impartial, he will not only admit the full amount of what we have alleged above, but acknowledge the half has not been told him.

Well, what becomes of Church discipline all the while? It is dormant.

The well-affected part of the membership, as well as the ministers, bear with unexampled patience all this unjust railing and abuse for seven long years. They individually remonstrate and entreat; but their remonstrances and entreaties do but inflame their adversaries—their patient endurance of wrongs is accounted pusillanimity, and threats and denunciations are multiplied. Emboldened by the impunity with which they are permitted to carry on the war, they proceed to still more offensive measures. They arraign a whole conference of ministers before the tribunal of their Union Societies, and without affording them the semblance of a trial, or an opportunity of defence, condemn them in the bitterest terms, and publish these denunciations in the public newspapers, their own vehicle of defamation being deemed insufficient to give them the necessary publicity.

Those who had long mourned and wept over these disorders, but who had still retained a hope that conciliatory measures might yet allay the strife, now gave up “the last, lingering, long-cherished hope of reconciliation.” Christian meekness and forbearance could do no more—could suffer no more. The Discipline is enforced, and some of the principal offenders, refusing all satisfaction or atonement, are cut off, and immediately the terrible cry of persecution is sounded; and even pending the trials before the Church judicatories it is heard and echoed from Georgia to Maine. But in the name of common sense and of Christian charity, we ask, Who have been persecuted? those who set up the cry of persecution, or the much-aggrieved Church, who is compelled to exclude them from her communion?

With those who are expelled others voluntarily retire, either because they had been co-workers with them, or because they were otherwise identified in feeling and interest with them; and these too reiterate the cry of persecution. They too have been persecuted out of the Church!

At length a General Convention is called, and delegates from the disaffected in different sections of the country assemble in Baltimore. They create a constitution and form of government for a new Church; publish their conventional articles of association, accompanying them with a preamble containing the bitterest invectives against the Methodist Episcopal Church. Yet these very delegates who had thus instituted a new Church, in direct opposition to ours, and appointed agents to carry their plans into effect, persist to claim their membership in the community from which they had obviously seceded. Nay, in some instances the very agents appointed by the convention to form Churches upon the plan agreed upon by the delegates, still claimed to exercise, not only the rights of membership, but of ministers of the Methodist Episcopal Church, against which they had received official authority to act as agents of the convention.

In some circuits and stations this course was very properly and promptly

resisted ; and those who attended the convention and whose names were appended to the articles of association, were considered as having withdrawn from the Church : in other places they were only removed from official stations in the Church : and in others the Church authorities were so afraid of the cry of persecution that no notice was officially taken of the delinquency. The lamentable cry of persecution, however, had been so long used with effect that it was not to be restrained by any course which could be taken. Those who were dealt with as having withdrawn from the Church, cried aloud and spared not. Those who were not noticed determined to provoke expulsion, that they might be furnished with the same talismanic word, and accordingly entered our Churches, read their articles of association, commented on them to the disparagement of our discipline, and finally invited the societies to join the new Church ! And where this was not allowed, or any efforts were made to counteract their designs, the whole neighbourhood was deafened with the cry of persecution. *Risum teneatis, amici.* Can anything be more ridiculous ? Are not the complainants themselves the bitterest persecutors of their patient and enduring brethren ?

And now that they have finally left us, do they not essay by all possible means to take away our churches ? Do they not avail themselves of their influence to induce trustees, to whom has been committed the safe-keeping of our meeting-houses, to betray the sacred trust reposed in them, and to divert those houses from the only use for which they were designed by those who erected them or who contributed to their erection ? Do they not seek to avail themselves of every legal informality which may be found in the instruments by which our houses of worship have been conveyed to us, and which obviously originated in the honest simplicity of those who drew them, who never apprehended that these houses, devoted to the worship of God, would ever become subjects of litigation ? Suppose that in a deed, intended to convey a piece of ground to the Methodist Episcopal Church for the purpose of erecting thereon a house of worship, the word "Episcopal" has been left out ; is not the intention as apparent as if the word were found in it a thousand times ? And is not the equity of the case quite as clear without the word as with it ? Can any legal defects in our titles give the associated Churches a claim to our property, when they were not in existence when these conveyances were made ? Even in a strictly-legal point of view this is impossible : but a Christian has only to inquire into the equity of the case ; for "he that is only law-honest is a dishonest man." Alas ! those who have complained so loudly of persecution have been the bitterest of persecutors, to the full amount of their power. They have persecuted their brethren with a perseverance that never tired and a zeal as unrelenting as death.

We put it to the common sense, to the consciences of our readers, to say

who, in all of what we have spoken, have been persecuted ; those who have undertaken to reform us after their fashion, and by such means, without the consent of five in a hundred of our membership, or we, against whom the complaint is made ? For people to complain of tyranny, and oppression, and persecution, when the just and retributive punishments of the law are felt, is natural ; for

“ No man e’er felt the halter draw,  
With a good opinion of the law.”

But to excite public sympathy it ought to be shown that they are “persecuted for righteousness’ sake.”



## NOTICE OF THE PERIODICAL ENTITLED "METHODIST CORRESPONDENT."

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MESSRS. EDITORS,—We have lately been favoured with a perusal of the "Methodist Correspondent," a paper published in Cincinnati. The title is evidently a misnomer, as no reason can be assigned for the appellation of "Methodist." The paper is quite as anti-methodistical as the old "Mutual Rights," of which, from its features, we suppose it to be a lineal descendant. In the seventeenth number we were amused with a communication headed "B, in reply to C," in which there is a most ludicrous display of impotent rage.

We had begun to think our great reformers were disposed to exercise, in reference to the review of their constitution and discipline, the same sound discretion by which they had been governed in regard to our friend C.'s review of the conventional articles. When we cannot satisfactorily answer an opponent, the next best thing is to observe a profound silence on the subject. An ineffectual effort at defence only betrays the weakness of the cause it would defend, and exposes this weakness to those whose party feelings keep them ignorant of the arguments of every assailant, until they are injudiciously presented to them by the indiscreet zeal of their leaders.

As it was manifestly impossible to make a successful defence against the review of their constitution and discipline, we had begun to applaud the patience of our radical brethren, which enabled them to bear in silence the utter demolition of the stupendous fabric they had reared with so much pains and labour, and which they had announced as the model which all Christian Churches should follow. But it was too much, it seems, to expect of human nature. They had not determined to submit in silence, and bear the cruel *dissection* without giving vent to their agony. They had only been like Tam O'Shanter's wife,

"Knitting their brows like gathering storm,  
Nursing their wrath to keep it warm."

The accumulating steam had collected until the "Correspondent" found it necessary to open a safety-valve, and having found vent the vapour has issued with a loud but very harmless roaring. In short, Mr. B is in a violent passion and beats the air most furiously.

"And who, pray," he asks, "is this Mr. C.? He is neither a bishop nor presiding elder; he is not a preacher in charge, nor even an itinerant. Why should a man who is nothing more than a *mere local preacher*, be

allowed to dictate to the whole episcopacy, ministry, and membership of the Methodist Episcopal Church, or prescribe the conditions on which they are to become friendly with us."

It would seem, then, that "C." would have been justified in prescribing these conditions if he had been "a bishop, a presiding elder, a preacher in charge, or even an itinerant!" But for a mere local preacher to give an opinion in such matters is not to be endured. How long is it since our radical friends have fallen in love with bishops and presiding elders, and learned to speak so contemptuously of local preachers? We had been taught to think that these titles, to which they accord such high rights, were as offensive to them as Satan himself, and that local preachers were the very pink of orthodoxy, and the most fit and proper persons in the world to govern the Church. Upon reflection, however, we recollect they have dropped the appellation of "local preachers," and have substituted the very significant cognomen of "unstationed preachers." We still think, however, that this is a distinction without a difference, and that "a rose by any *other name* would smell as sweet." C. will not, therefore, readily forgive Mr. B. for the mortification he has endured from being announced to the world as a "mere local preacher."

But, in sober seriousness, would B. have thought better of the review if it had been written by "a bishop, a presiding elder, a preacher in charge, or even an itinerant?" On the contrary, would he not have alleged that such assailants of the new constitution and discipline were writing in defence of their own "inordinate and surreptitiously-obtained powers and prerogatives?" Who then could, with more propriety, defend the economy of the Methodist Episcopal Church than a local preacher? As he derives no temporal emoluments from this economy, and does not participate in the envied powers and prerogatives it confers, his defence, at least, must be allowed the merit of disinterestedness; and as radical local preachers have been foremost among those who have complained of oppression in our Church, the injustice of such complaints can be in no way so satisfactorily shown as by the abiding attachment of those who, if there had been any oppression, must necessarily have felt their portion of the evil.

But "C." has said that the allegations against the Methodist Episcopal Church, contained in the preface to the new constitution and discipline, were offensive and unjust, and that while they remained there the Episcopal Methodists could not, without tacitly admitting their truth, give the right hand of fellowship to those who thus unwarrantably abused and traduced them. They could not reciprocate ministerial services with those who had taken pains, in the only official act of their confederacy, to hold them up to public odium as tyrants, and despots, and lordlings over the rights and consciences of men. And is not all this obviously true?

We have always and do still deny that we ever wished to restrict the liberty of speech or the press—we have only punished their licentiousness. Of arguments in favour of a change in our Church polity we have not, and do not, complain; we have only insisted that abuse and slander was not argument, and that inveighing and railing were not to be tolerated in a Christian community. It is true we have expelled from our communion members of Union Societies, because some, by their authorized agents, committed these offences, and others publicly justified and circulated the slanders, and refused to disavow them or make any atonement. For the truth of all this we appeal to the publications themselves, or to the selections from them as published in the Narrative and Defence of the proceedings in Baltimore.

We have long since submitted the issue to the opinion of the public, and are willing to abide the verdict. The preface to the new Discipline is a reiterated declaration of hostilities which originally declared a war of extermination. An effort has been made to destroy the standing and character of our ministry, and to rob us of our altars; and now that the effort has failed the belligerent party affect to desire peace, while they expose the hollowness of the pretension, by prefixing to their new code an *order of council* as impotent as it is unjust and ungenerous. And yet, while they thus add insult to injury, they hold out the hand of peace!

But to the review. C. had shown that the new code had destroyed all possibility of sustaining an itinerancy in their connexion, by placing the stationing power in the annual conferences, composed one-half of laymen. The travelling preachers could not be expected long to submit to the exercise of an absolute authority over them by laymen and local preachers, who were not themselves subject to this authority. They could not long endure that those laymen and local preachers should lay upon them burdens which none of them would touch with one of their fingers. That in the Methodist Episcopal Church the travelling preachers were stationed by persons of their own choice, who were amenable to them for the exercise of their authority, and who themselves were partakers of their labours and privations. To all this it is answered, that the "Protestant Methodists love itinerancy as well as the Episcopal Methodists; that they love it as a general advantage to Christianity, and wish all Churches to adopt it:" and to all this we reply that C. has nowhere pretended to determine how much the Protestant Methodists *love* itinerancy—he has only shown that they have taken effectual measures to *destroy* it.

But B. denies that the episcopal authority to station preachers in the Methodist Episcopal Church is restrained at all, or that the bishops are amenable to the General Conference for the official exercise of prerogative

in this respect. Now we assert, that every General Conference appoints a committee on the episcopacy, whose duty it is to examine everything in relation to these officers of the Church ; and should this committee report unfavourably upon the conduct of one of the bishops, and should the report be sustained by the Conference, the bishop would be censured or deposed without the formality of any other trial.

When it suited their purpose the radicals reminded us that this had been done, and therefore could be done again. They pointed to our Church history for the fact, that even Mr. Wesley's name was left off the minutes by a vote of the General Conference ; and it is a fact, also, that the same thing happened in the case of Dr. Coke. The precedent, therefore, has been set, and set, too, under circumstances that show the bishops to be absolutely at the disposal of the General Conference in respect to their official authority ; for, in the cases above alluded to, one was left off the minutes from the apprehension that he intended to recall Mr. Asbury to England, and the other because he remained in England beyond the period assigned by the Conference for his return. It is true Mr. Wesley's name was restored the following year, when the Conference discovered that their apprehensions were groundless ; but this fact sustains the authority which we contend for, as belonging to the General Conference. C. was right, then, notwithstanding the blustering of his antagonist, when he asserted that "bishops had been, and therefore can be again, deposed, and, in point of fact, are elected every four years." Yet Mr. B. asks, "When was a Methodist bishop deposed?" He will find the answer to his question in the "Mutual Rights"—authority which, with all his boasted liberty, he dare not question.

But Mr. B. contends that laymen and local preachers are "equally interested with the travelling preachers in the exercise of the stationing power." If the travelling preachers of the new Church can admit this, we certainly have no right to quarrel with the assertion, but we must be allowed to say that we had formed a different estimate of the privations and sufferings of a travelling preacher.

It is true that we have some preferences to gratify in the appointment of the preachers, but we had not been in the habit of comparing these gratifications, or our disappointments when we were not gratified, with the deep solicitude which an itinerant minister must feel in regard to the place to which his allotment may fall. Whoever comes to us, we still retain all our temporal advantages. Our chances or facilities to make bread and procure raiment for our families will be still the same : but the appointment of a preacher may make an awful difference to him in this respect ; and we cannot help thinking that an abridgment in the articles of either food or clothing, is a matter of more "*interest*" than to be deprived of the pleasure of hearing a favourite preacher. However, this

is only *our* opinion—our “reformed” friends must be allowed to think for themselves; but we really do think that such harmless opinions might be allowed to pass without procuring for our friend C. the harsh epithet of “a warm and persevering bigot.” Nor do we think that such epithets will increase the weight of B.’s arguments, or mend a single error which C. has shown to exist in the new code.

B. tells us that “the moment a bishop is ordained, no General Conference has any control of his executive power as long as he lives, unless he can be so convicted of some crime as to be expelled from the Church,” and we are defied “to put our finger upon a sentence in the Discipline which makes a bishop responsible to anybody for the exercise of the stationing power.” The Discipline expressly defines the duties of the bishops, and restricts the stationing power by express provisions, and, moreover, declares that they are “amenable to the General Conference for their conduct,” and “may be expelled by the Conference for *improper* conduct” as well as for immorality. Now, will anybody say that a neglect to fulfil the duties imposed by the Discipline, or transcending his authority, would not be “improper” conduct? Have we not here another proof that those who have so unmercifully abused our Discipline, never have taken the pains to consult its provisions?

C. had asserted that “in point of fact the bishops were elected every four years,” and B. tells him he “might as well have asserted that the King of England and the Emperor of Russia are elected every four years.” We will admit the parallel if B. will show that the supreme councils of these countries have ever deposed their monarchs by simply leaving their names off the list of officers; and that their majesties have no standing armies to enforce their claim, right or wrong. We have given the precedent in the case of Methodist bishops, and B.’s friends, far from denying it, have urged it against us as a high misdemeanour. We hold C., therefore, justified in saying that officers whose conduct is subjected to examination by the supreme council every four years, and who may be discontinued if not approved, “are in point of fact elected every four years.” At every General Conference the question occurs, “Who are the superintendents or bishops?” If, in the answer to this question, any bishop’s name be left out, he ceases to exercise his functions, and if he continue in the connexion, he must fall into the itinerant ranks. It is true that no General Conference would venture upon such a step unless imperious necessity called for it; but that they may, if such necessity exist, exercise the authority, is beyond all question.

But C. has given still greater offence. He has shown that the new code authorizes the trustees of any Church, upon the recommendation of two-thirds of the male members over twenty-one years of age, “to sell, lease, mortgage, or *otherwise dispose of*” the Church property; and hence

two-thirds of the male members over twenty-one years of age, may, without the consent of one-third of such members, the consent of any male member under that age, or any one of the females who generally constitute a large majority of the members, sell or lease the Church to a Unitarian or any other minister, or may turn the travelling preacher out of the pulpit, and employ a local preacher in his place. B. replies that it is true "two-thirds of the male members have the authority to purchase, build, sell, lease, rent," &c.\* "*But all this is to be done for the mutual benefit of the Church, so that the one-third, the minority who did not give their votes for the sale, are secured by the constitution in their proportion of the property or price.*" And why not the minors and the females? We suppose, however, that B. does not exclude them—he only forgot them. Either way it must be acknowledged that our friend C.'s sagacity failed him in this matter. He did not advert to the fact that after our radical friends had taxed the generosity of all their friends and neighbours of other denominations, or of no Christian denomination, to build them a Church, they may coolly sell the property and divide the money among themselves! We thank Mr. B. for the hint, and we hope the public will profit by it. We hope our reformers will in future head all their subscription papers for building churches with this information. Common honesty demands it of them, although it might prevent some from subscribing very liberally if they knew that their subscriptions, instead of being applied to the erection of a permanent house of worship, might be appropriated to the building a house to be sold for the "mutual benefit of the members of the Church," who would each be entitled to their "proportion of the price."

B. retorts upon C. that the trustees of Methodist Episcopal churches are authorized to sell or mortgage the property "*under certain circumstances.*" He forgets to state under *what* circumstances this may be done; we shall be at the pains of refreshing his memory. If the trustees, in purchasing or building, shall have contracted a debt which the society is unable to pay, they are liable of course to be sued, and therefore are authorized to sell or mortgage the property in order to pay the debts of the Church. But under no "*other circumstances*" can they alienate a house of worship, or convert it to any other use than that which was originally designed by the contributors in and out of the Church. We have no chance, therefore, of speculating on public liberality; but under radical contrivance and arrangement, their members may drive a profitable trade by begging money and building houses to be sold and the "price" divided in due proportion among them. B. has done us, and perhaps the community, an essential service by pointing out this, in addition to the numerous

\* What a convenient thing an et cetera is sometimes! Mr. B. did not like to add "and otherwise dispose of."

blunders which C. has shown to have been committed by our "reformers," in their much-lauded constitution and discipline.

To conclude, B. is mistaken in supposing our friend C. to be "a mere local preacher;" he is a doctor to boot, and it must be acknowledged that his prescriptions are operating admirably. Another such emesis of bile, and we shall expect to hear that B. is something better. We recommend to him, if he is convalescent, to take, by way of a tonic and prophylactic, a moderate quantity of the preparation of wormwood prescribed by C. in the last number of his review. It may secure him from an undue secretion of gall, and consequently from a relapse into the radical fever.

(PHILO. C.)

NOTICE OF THE PERIODICAL ENTITLED "METHODIST CORRESPONDENT."  
—CONTINUED.

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MESSRS. EDITORS,—We have been greatly amused in looking over the reply of B. to C. in the Methodist Correspondent. B. continues in the same bad temper, and scolds most sadly, because C. has had the temerity to examine the new constitution and discipline, and point out its defects. He admits, however, that their rules with respect to the trial of members are wholly indefensible; but this, he says, is not the only instance in which the deliberations of the convention were misguided by the *spirit of democracy*—rather a queer acknowledgment for one of the peculiar friends of the people! We recollect, that when the errors of the conventional articles were pointed out, a radical writer in the Mutual Rights told us, that they were the sticklers for itinerancy who spoiled the wise plans of the convention. In the last convention the sticklers for itinerancy gave way, and the democrats obtained the ascendancy, and to these hot-headed democrats Mr. B. thinks are to be charged the absurdities of the new code. We confess we are sorry to hear so bad an account of our friends the democrats, but we hope they may yet be tamed, and brought to a more sober way of thinking.

But B. assures us they really mean to insist upon class-meeting as a condition of membership; and he insists, moreover, that the meeting in class is "enjoined by the word of God." "This gentleman (C.) has yet to learn that it will be *pretended* that the meeting in class is among the rules of moral discipline which the word of God requires." We advise Mr. B. to hasten on to Baltimore, and do his utmost to convince his brethren here that they have misunderstood the Discipline of the new Church, and the word of God. Class-meeting is not considered by the Protestant Methodist Church here as obligatory upon the members, and membership may be maintained without it. It will, moreover, be recollected by all who have read the Wesleyan Repository, that among the bitterest complaints urged against the Methodist Episcopal Church, by Mr. Snethen, was the unscriptural requisition to meet in class as a condition of membership.

This complaint was echoed by most of Mr. Snethen's followers in this place, and he claims to be the father of the reformation. B., however, has strangely misunderstood, or wilfully misrepresented C. on the subject of class-meetings. He accuses him of saying, that class-meetings are "unwarranted" and "unsupported by Scripture." Now C. has no-



where said this. He has indeed admitted, that this institution is nowhere *specifically enjoined* in the Scriptures; but surely he has constantly endeavoured to show, that it is warranted by the relation which subsists between the Christian pastor and his flock. In the first volume of the *Itinerant*, page 202, after showing the origin of class-meetings, and that they were not instituted or imposed by the General Conference, he urges the Scriptural argument expressly and pointedly: he says,—

“*Secondly.* The Scriptures evidently require of the pastors of the Church, a faithful oversight of the flock. They are directed to watch over them as those who must render an account of them to God. It is their duty to instruct the ignorant, to support the weak, comfort the afflicted, confirm the wavering, and repress the froward. By a settled pastor, permanently resident among his flock, this may be done, perhaps, by frequent domiciliary visits; but by an itinerating ministry it can only be accomplished by means of some such institution as our class-meetings. It is, however, obvious, that if the Scriptures impose pastoral duties upon the ministry, the membership are bound to place themselves in such a relation to their ministers as will enable them to fulfil these duties; and, hence, they who prefer an itinerating ministry are bound to submit to such regulations as may be necessary to the due and faithful discharge of ministerial obligation. It will not, we presume, be denied, that our itinerating ministry is a Scriptural institution; and, hence, whatever is essential to its existence and usefulness, may be properly required of those who voluntarily put themselves under the pastoral care of such a ministry.

“*Thirdly.* When a Methodist refuses to meet his class, he virtually withdraws from the Church. He renounces the social obligation into which he entered when he became a member of the community. He puts it out of the power of the pastors of the Church to fulfil their ministerial duties to him; and as they can no longer watch over him, they cannot be expected to be responsible for him, or to admit him to the communion, his fitness for which they have no longer any means of ascertaining. He is accordingly, by our rule of discipline, ‘*laid aside,*’ and not expelled for immoral conduct. If it be alleged that a man does not, properly speaking, withdraw from the Church unless he accompanies the act by some corresponding declaration, in word or writing, we answer, that the Church possesses no authority to require a written or verbal withdrawal, or any explicit renunciation of Church privileges, and is therefore compelled to consider an actual removal from pastoral oversight as a withdrawal from Church membership. The rule, then, which requires a Methodist to meet in class, is not a penal statute added to the divine laws—it is a voluntary, social contract, which, when not fulfilled, implies a renunciation of the compact, which it is admitted every one has a right to make whenever he repents of his engagements; but he cannot dissolve

the compact and still retain the privileges which grow out of it. The obligation and the benefits which accrue from it cease at the same time."

In the Appeal to the Methodists, page 51, the same writer says:—"Among the complaints which have been made against our present system of government the originator and leader of the projected reformation denounces the rule of our Discipline which requires meeting in class as a condition of membership. (Vide Wes. Rep., vol. i, page 329.) He contends that it is an unscriptural condition, and that the Church has no right to impose it. It is not objected that these meetings are useless or hurtful; on the contrary, they are acknowledged to be a means of grace eminently calculated to promote the interests of the Church: and we may add, that to a Church under the direction of an itinerating ministry they are indispensable; for such a ministry could not, without the aid of this or some similar institution, effectually execute the duties of a pastor. The limited term of a preacher's appointment to any circuit or station, renders it impossible for him to form an intimate acquaintance with the members of his charge, and hence he could not know whether they were walking as becometh the gospel—whether they were individually growing in grace, or backsliding in heart from God. Without it no moral discipline could be enforced, no pastoral duties be performed, or any unity of sentiment in doctrines preserved among the members of the Church. Now, surely that which is confessedly necessary to the promotion of piety, peace, and love—without which the spirituality of the Church would decay, and her communion be thrown open to those who have neither the fear of God before their eyes, nor his love in their hearts—cannot be without Scripture warrant. The propriety of such conditions of communion, must be clearly inferable from the doctrines and precepts of the gospel, which the Church is bound to inculcate and enforce upon all her members. But if the reformers insist upon changing the rule which makes it obligatory upon our members to meet in class, because there is no positive Scriptural demand for it, they must also give up infant baptism, and the administration of the communion to females, for there is no such commandment for either the one or the other."

Yet B. says, that C. contends that class-meeting is "unsupported," and "not warranted by the word of God," and yet justifies the Methodist Episcopal Church in making the meeting in class a condition of membership. The truth is, C. contends that every Methodist is bound to meet in class, because he has promised to do so when he joined the Church; because they are admitted to be necessary under our itinerant economy, to enable the pastors of the Church to fulfil the duties enjoined upon them by the word of God; and because they are admitted to be eminently useful in promoting the edification of the Church. But he does not allege a

positive Scriptural command for their institution; on the contrary, he would admit that if any other plan or scheme could be invented, which would better secure the objects designed to be accomplished by class-meeting, it ought to be adopted. But if for class-meeting we had a "thus saith the Lord," we would not be at liberty to substitute anything in its stead.

But is Mr. B. aware of what will be the consequence of his insisting that class-meeting is "*among the rules of moral discipline enjoined by the word of God?*" Is he aware that he not only unchristianizes all other sects and denominations of Christians who have not adopted them, but that he also impeaches the Christian profession of his brethren of the Protestant Methodist Church here and elsewhere, who understand the rules of moral discipline enjoined by the word of God, as well as the constitution and discipline of his Church, differently from himself? But without this "pretension," it was impossible for B. to show that the new Church had made the meeting in class a condition of membership. They have not done so, unless the attendance upon class-meeting be among "the rules of moral discipline which the word of God enjoins." Whether the omission was intentional, or whether it occurred in the confusion which "the democracy" of the assembly occasioned, we do not know; but that no member of the new Church can be constitutionally compelled to attend class-meeting, will be clear to any impartial reader.

It is true that B. shows abundant proof that social, religious meetings are enjoined upon the followers of Christ: but these are not *necessarily* class-meetings. They may be prayer-meetings, or any other meetings for religious worship; and therefore all Mr. B.'s flourishing about these religious meetings, goes for nothing; or else all the Episcopalians, Presbyterians, Baptists, &c., who have no class-meetings, are guilty of a violation of the apostolic injunction, *not to forsake the assembling of themselves together as the manner of some is*,—an allegation which we think Mr. B. is not yet ready to make.

C. has asserted, that a member of the Protestant Methodist Church cannot be excluded from communion for refusing or neglecting to attend class-meeting; B. most strenuously asserts the contrary, and is in very high temper about it. Let us then suppose Mr. B. to be a class-leader in the new Church, and that he has the misfortune to have received a member who, after a time, ceases to attend his class, either from declension of piety, or from that spirit of "democracy" which, he says, marred the plans of the convention. Let us see how he would deal with the delinquent. We propose the following dialogue:—

*Mr. B.* Brother L., I have called to inquire why you have so long neglected your class?

*L.* Why, brother B., I do not find class-meeting very profitable to me;

and I think I can employ my time more profitably in reading the Scriptures, and other good books, on Sunday morning before I go to Church.

*B.* It is strange you do not find class-meetings profitable, when so many thousands have found them among the most edifying means of grace.

*L.* I think I am as good as a great many who regularly go to class; and I am sure that I can improve my mind better by reading, than by meeting with a parcel of people who know no more than myself.

*B.* But are you not bound by the discipline to meet in class, as one of the means of grace, upon pain of expulsion?

*L.* No, sir; the constitution provides that "no minister or member shall be excommunicated, except for immorality, the propagation of unchristian doctrines, or the neglect of the duties enjoined by the word of God." The absenting myself from class constitutes neither of the above offences, and therefore I am not liable to be disowned for doing so.

*B.* Pardon me, brother; class-meeting is among the rules of moral discipline enjoined by the word of God; for the apostle expressly charges us "not to forsake the assembling ourselves together as the manner of some is."

*L.* True, sir; but I fulfil the injunction of the apostle when I go to Church, to the communion, or to prayer-meeting. It is nowhere said in Scripture, that these assemblies mean class-meeting. A moral or religious duty must have a "thus saith the Lord" for it. My Episcopalian and Presbyterian neighbours have no class-meetings, nor other private meetings; and will you say that there are no moral and religious men among them? Are they all guilty of a violation of one of the "rules of moral discipline enjoined by the word of God?" Besides, I have been to Baltimore lately, the very metropolis of reform, and I find our brethren there do not so interpret the discipline. They know their liberties under our glorious constitution, and are not to be priest-ridden, nor ridden by class-leaders either. You may bring me to trial as soon as you please. I will give you Mr. Snethen himself for it. I have the Wesleyan Repository.

Whether *B.* would cite the absentee to trial or not, I am not prepared to say; but I am sure that if he did, the verdict would acquit him, if justice were done according to law.

*Mr. B.* seems displeased that we should have spoken so confidently of the success of the Review; and yet the perturbation which *B.* manifests is no slight evidence that its effect is not greatly overrated. "The practice of the itinerant writers in praising one another," he says, "is of long standing." This is an assertion which he does not condescend to sustain by a single proof: but if it were true, how does it apply to either *C.* or *Philo C.*? We are not right certain that we understand what is meant by *itinerant*

writers. An itinerant writer would strictly mean one who writes while he is travelling, and then it would seem to be intended for travelling preachers. But neither C. nor Philo C. are travelling preachers; and hence the remark has no application whatever. "Mr. C.," we are told, "has received many a soothing compliment, long before Philo C. made his appearance." True, but the most direct and "soothing compliments" have been paid by the best writer, and one of the most honest men on the side of reform. Mr. Shinn, in his "Review of the Appeal to the Methodists," returns his thanks to the writer for the temper and spirit in which it is written; and very lately has said, "it is the very best book that has been written during this whole controversy." No "itinerant writer" has ventured upon such a "soothing compliment" to the author; and Mr. B. will not venture to impugn the authority from which it emanated. He ought, therefore, to have spared us his taunts about compliments.

As an apology for the many defects in the new code, which cannot be concealed or defended, we are told that the convention had such a multiplicity of business to do, that everything could not be done; and besides, they were greatly annoyed by the "spirit of democracy," alias radicalism. Now we do not so much complain of what the convention did *not* do, as of what they have done. They have made Church trials a fruitful source, not only of litigation and strife, but of grievous scandal; and withal rendered Church discipline wholly inefficient by making it impossible to remove a cunning, artful offender, who, for sinister purposes, desires to retain his membership. They have made the tenure of Church property insecure, in relation to the confederacy, and put it in the power of a small minority of any "individual associate Church" to convert the meeting-house, built by general subscription, to their own individual advantage, or to turn it over to any heterodox sect to whom they may incline. They may sell the house and distribute the money among the members of the "individual associate Church," to the total exclusion of all the other contributors; or they may employ a Unitarian or Universalist preacher, and exclude the ministers of the Protestant Methodist Churches from the pulpit. They have, by omitting any recognition of the right of the great Head of the Church to call and qualify his own ministers, virtually asserted that any man or woman has a right to assume this office without any divine call; and the editor of the official paper has not only asserted this principle, but laboured it out most heartily. They have released their members from the obligation of class-meetings, although they affect to institute an itinerant plan of ministration, and have therefore left the pastors of the Church without any means of ascertaining the religious deportment of their flocks. Their altars are thus exposed to desecration, without help or remedy, unless they give up their itinerancy for a settled ministry. The only hope which B. can entertain is, that when they shall be delivered

from the "spirit of democracy," which, he says, so mischievously operated in the last convention, the reformers will re-reform their government; and may we not entertain the hope, that when there shall come to be a "right spirit in them," they will return to their first love, and seek a reunion with the Church they have so causelessly forsaken?

## MR. SNETHEN'S SECOND REPLY TO MR. O'KELLY.

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It will be recollected that Mr. Snethen excused himself for having so severely chastised Mr. O'Kelly, his predecessor in reform, by alleging that his reply to that gentleman was written at the request of Mr. Asbury and the Methodist Conference, and therefore he is only entitled to be considered as the secretary of the Conference. I am truly sorry that a man we had so highly esteemed should have placed himself in circumstances which make it necessary to avow that he had, at the bidding of any man, or body of men, controverted and ridiculed with apparent sincerity principles and opinions which he held to be really true. But since this avowal was made, a second reply from Mr. Snethen to Mr. O'Kelly has been put into my hands; and as Mr. Snethen has accused me of writing merely "to show how well I can write," I will in my turn show how well Mr. Snethen *could write* when he was inspired by a good theme. The pamphlet before us was printed in Philadelphia, by S. W. Conrad, in 1802, and is entitled, "An Answer to James O'Kelly's Vindication of his Apology, and an Explanation of the Reply. By Nicholas Snethen." We shall be liberal in our extracts from this pamphlet, because Mr. Snethen does not profess to write as secretary to Mr. Asbury and the Conference, and may be supposed in this instance to give his *own* views and sentiments. How he will reconcile his testimony to the fact that Mr. Wesley recommended the episcopal form of government with his recent conduct, in aiding and abetting the author of the "History and Mystery," we leave to reformers to divine; for ourselves we see no way of escape. But to the book:—

*"To the friends of Bishop Asbury, and the General Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church.*

"RESPECTED BRETHREN,—To whose patronage could a subject of this kind be so properly committed as to yours, whose unshaken attachment in every varying scene prove you to be friends indeed? The difference of your interests, your modes and habits of life, and even prejudices by education, serve only to display the genuineness and sincerity of your affection as Christians; for what but Christian love can bring men of different nations, avocations, and religious opinions, into the same unvarying and constant unity and friendship?

"Many of you know what was old Methodism, and are competent to judge what changes, if any, have taken place from the beginning; and I

am persuaded that you are well satisfied that the same spirit now animates the body, and that no radical alterations have been effected in the great principles of our excellent predecessors. Many of you have had the confidence of Mr. Asbury, and must know if he has swerved in any measure from his first profession.

"I speak, brethren, with the greater confidence upon this subject, as I know that, notwithstanding your different interests, it is impossible for you all to be blinded by prejudice; for your wisdom and discernment are sufficient to enable you to judge in this matter, and your goodness and integrity will not suffer you to pervert the truth.

"Union of affection appears to me to be the greatest of all relative ties; to think and speak alike, however desirable, is nothing in comparison to this. We all have our opinions,—mine differ from those of many of my friends,—and though I have the greatest complacency and confidence in my favourite notions, yet I cheerfully offer them, under existing circumstances, at the shrine of brotherly love; being fully persuaded, that for any one to differ from me in what I believe to be Scriptural involves no moral guilt: nay, what is more, I do not think that my brethren would be purer in their intentions, and more disposed to do good, if they should think exactly as I do in those points where we differ.

"Sensible that men's opinions are seldom, if ever, formed or corrected in the heat of controversy; and that their sentiments and characters are different things, to be treated in a different manner, I so calculated the Reply, that it should principally fix upon those charges in the Apology which involved personal consequences, and only touched upon the subject of government so far as to establish certain principles on which to discuss this important point. When Mr. O'Kelly has fully proved all the charges he has alleged against the bishop and Conference, and beaten us quite out of the field, it will be time enough to proceed upon government.

"My conscience does not accuse me of any intention or design to misrepresent and thereby to injury M. O'Kelly's character; nor do I believe that you would patronize me in so doing.

"In brotherly love, I am, &c.,

"NICHOLAS SNETHEN.

"BALTIMORE, *April 25th*, 1842."

"Mr. Asbury's character had been assailed before upon a similar occasion, and he found friends to step forth in his defence. In the present case he prepared an answer to Mr. O'Kelly; but his friends advised him to leave the business in the hands of his sons in the gospel. 'This is he,' Mr. O'Kelly says in his preface, 'who always keeps behind the screen.' During those unhappy divisions which rent the bosom of the Church in Charleston, Mr. Asbury visited it annually; and he has not spent less than one-twelfth of



his time in Virginia since the division by Mr. O'Kelly. The rest of the time he has indeed been behind the screen, that is, out of sight of the societies in Charleston and Virginia. But what has he been doing behind the screen? How did he spend his time there? One might follow him behind the screen to the banks of the Kennebec in the east; to the borders of the lakes in the north; over the Alleghany and Cumberland Mountains to the west; and over the Savannah River to the south. These are the screens which have hidden Mr. Asbury from his brethren and from his friends in Virginia. Mr. O'Kelly was never behind those screens; he knows not what has been done, is doing, or to be done there. But many of our preachers know that the bishop has more to do and to suffer there than in those settlements where a man has a plentiful table every day to eat at, and a good bed every night and a ceiled room to sleep in. If Mr. O'Kelly would leave his beloved haunts through the midlands of North Carolina and Virginia, and take one round behind those screens; if he would travel, faint and weary, over the rocks of the north and the hills of the west; if he should have to encamp a few nights on the bare ground, cold and wet, at Richland Creek, the Hazel Patch, and Cumberland River; if he should be crowded in a hut with a parcel of hunters and promiscuous travellers, I think he would then have new ideas, and be able to expose Methodist episcopacy in a much juster light than he has yet done."

"I seriously think the Apology was the author's worst day's work, and that it had been happy for him and perhaps hundreds in Virginia, if he had never made it; but this is a matter of opinion merely, and must remain in a great measure secret, until *that day*; then shall it be known how many have perished for lack of knowledge who would have heard the gospel of their salvation had not their minds been prejudiced against its faithful preachers by Mr. O'Kelly's writings.

"As for Reuben Ellis, if the expressions which are attributed to him in the preface are as correct as the character there given him, many who were intimately acquainted with him will give them to the winds from whence they came. 'That violent episcopalian:' nay, this was not the character of Mr. Ellis; he never was a son of *violence*, but slow to speak, slow to wrath, a man of great sweetness and equanimity of temper, who seldom, if ever, carried anything to extremes. It is true he was a faithful friend to the Methodist Episcopal Church, and to this day his name is precious to hundreds of her members.

"Vindication, page 6: 'He evades it entirely and never answers that grand question, nor offers to explain or defend their episcopal government.' I really thought that I had not only attempted, but actually written many things, both to explain and defend the episcopal government against Mr. O'Kelly's misrepresentations and attempts to destroy it."

"Vindication, page 7: 'Here I deny the election of Dr. Coke and Francis

Asbury, by the suffrage of the American Conference. Now for the proof I appeal to their own records.' But do those records say they were not elected? If not, why appeal to them? The election of the bishops is well consistent with the minutes. The Conference might agree to acknowledge Mr. Wesley, and yet elect Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury; Mr. Wesley might ordain Dr. Coke and direct him to ordain Mr. Asbury, and yet they might be elected, there is no contradiction; in all this, make the most of 'our records' and the 'notorious fact,' and they only prove that the bishops had the appointment and approbation of 'dear Wesley.'"

"Vindication, page 8: 'Now let the impartial reader judge where truth lies and do me justice.' Nay, the impartial reader cannot judge right without hearing both sides of the question. But Mr. O'Kelly says, page 7, 'he could qualify he heard no talk of an election there.' Does he mean that he could take his oath upon the holy evangelists of Almighty God, that Francis Asbury was not elected by the suffrage of the Conference held in Baltimore, in 1784? Oaths are solemn things! When Dr. Coke disclosed Mr. Wesley's intention that Mr. Asbury should be ordained, he refused to accept the ordination without the election of the preachers; for he knew it was not proper to attempt to serve the American connexion without their consent, as they were to be constituted a separate body, not subordinate to the British connexion. To obtain the election of the superintendents or bishops was a special part of the design of calling that Conference. Dr. Coke, in his sermon at the ordination of Bishop Asbury, says expressly, in presence of the members of that Conference, page 8, 'We have every qualification for an episcopal Church which Alexandria possessed for two hundred years, our bishops or superintendents having been elected or received by the suffrages of the whole body of our ministers through the continent, assembled in General Conference.' And in the Minutes of that Conference, page 11, it is said, in a N. B. to question 26, 'No person shall be ordained a superintendent without the consent of a majority of the Conference.' In addition to this, read the following testimony, viz.: 'We whose names are undersigned, do testify that we were members of the Conference held in Baltimore, in the year of our Lord 1784, and that the method of deciding all questions in said Conference was by voting, and that Mr. Asbury was elected as is asserted in the Reply, page 9, by a unanimous vote.'

'EDWARD DROMGOOLE,  
IRA ELLIS,  
WILLIAM WATERS,  
LEROY COLE,  
JOHN HAGERTY.'

"Now, impartial reader, if Mr. O'Kelly has nothing more to say in his own 'vindication,' you may judge where the truth lies and do him justice."

“Vindication, page 10: ‘He undertakes to refute a charge against the bishop, when it has no appearance of a charge, only the circumstance was mentioned to keep up the thread of my history.’ It is a pity that the thread of his history cannot be kept up without mistakes and errors. But if Mr. O’Kelly did not design this as a charge, why does he not give up the case? It will, perhaps, appear in the sequel very much like a charge, both in the Apology and the Vindication. The Apology says that Bishop Asbury was opposed to a joint superintendent; the Reply says he was not; and the Vindication asks, page 9, ‘What is the difference?’ The difference is the same as it is between right and wrong, or (if the reader will allow the expression) between truth and falsehood. Dr. Coke says, that Mr. Asbury acquiesced in the appointment, as did the Charleston Conference. Mr. Bruce says, ‘Mr. Asbury convinced him that he was not opposed to the appointment.’ Mr. Whatcoat says, Mr. Asbury was not opposed to his being a joint superintendent with himself. See Reply, pages 3, 10. But ‘Francis,’ it seems, ‘said but little.’ O that he had always kept such a watch upon the door of his lips while in the presence of Mr. O’Kelly and men of his disposition! Vindication, page 10: ‘In the ninth verse I make mention of the origin of the title bishop at a district conference even in 1787. Three times four and four times three is all the difference between the report and the reply.’ If the reader can have patience he may try the question by the rule of simple multiplication. Apology, verse 3: ‘Francis directed the preachers whenever they write to him to title him bishop.’ Reply, page 11: ‘The Conference advised that every one should use his own choice; and that those who doubted the propriety of reverend might give the simple name with the official character, as bishop, elder, or deacon.’ Are these accounts as near alike as twelve and twelve? Apology, *ibid.*: ‘They did so, and this was the beginning of our spurious episcopacy.’ And why not of our ‘spurious’ eldership? Reply, *ibid.*: ‘To attempt to give an account of the beginning of Methodist episcopacy, which is so well known, in order to show the fallacy of Mr. O’Kelly’s account, would be to trifle with common sense and to sink the reply into contempt.’ Vindication, page 11: ‘We both agree that the title bishop was born at the said district conference, and on account of its low and untimely birth I deem it spurious episcopacy.’ Judicious reader, if you can deign to cast an eye over the Apology and the Reply, tell me if you can see any agreement between Mr. O’Kelly and myself about this matter. Vindication, page 11: ‘This episcopacy is the disputed point, and the proctor passeth by the mountain without notice!’ Looking over the Apology I was a little startled, at first view, with an object of some apparent magnitude; but on examining it more attentively I found it was a little heap of Mr. O’Kelly’s absurdities, around which he had raised the mist of error and the fog of deception, in order to magnify it into a mountain. If the origin of

Methodist episcopacy must be dated from the first mention of the name bishop as a character of the superintendents, it must be dated from the Conference of 1784. See Dr. Coke's sermon upon Mr. Asbury's ordination, page 8: 'Our *bishops* or *superintendents* have been elected by our ministers assembled in General Conference.' The American preachers in 1784, by Mr. Wesley's advice and consent, agreed, by a majority of votes, to form themselves into a separate body, to be called the Methodist Episcopal Church in America. Francis Asbury, who had acted for a number of years under Mr. Wesley as a general assistant, was elected by a *unanimous vote*, to be one of the bishops or superintendents over the said Church.

"At the same Conference one Mr. James O'Kelly, since famous as the author of a division in this Church, and of a book he calls an Apology, was ordained an elder to administer the sacraments in the said Episcopal Church. I hope he does not think I wish to 'evade' these facts; if I had any design in not recurring to them in the Reply, except their being intimately known, it was that I might not seem to expose the ingratitude and inconsistency of Mr. O'Kelly in traducing his fathers in religion and the ministry, and yet continuing to act as an elder by virtue of the ordination he obtained by the laying on of the hands of the bishops of the Methodist Episcopal Church, which he calls a 'spurious episcopacy.' See the Minutes, question 3: 'As the ecclesiastical as well as the civil affairs of these United States have passed through a very considerable change by the revolution, what plan of Church government shall we hereafter pursue? Answer. We will form ourselves into an Episcopal Church, under the direction of superintendents, (otherwise bishops,) elders, deacons, and helpers, according to the form of ordination annexed to our liturgy, and the form of discipline set forth in these minutes.' I would ask Mr. O'Kelly what new powers Mr. Asbury or the superintendent obtained by being called bishop? What alteration followed 'the origin of' what he calls 'spurious episcopacy' in the year of our Lord 1787? Did not everything remain as it had done from the year 1784 in all the connexion? See Minutes, page 11, question 26: 'What is the office of a *superintendent*? Answer. To ordain *superintendents*, *elders*, and deacons; to preside as a moderator in our conferences; to fix the appointments of the preachers for the several circuits; and in the intervals of the conference to change, receive, or suspend preachers as necessity may require, and to receive appeals from the preachers and people and decide them.' Vindication, page 10: 'But I well remember his introduction to the proposal of that title, viz.: I dislike the long *Latin* name superintendent.' Perhaps I may show hereafter my reasons for doubting Mr. O'Kelly's word in this instance: but supposing he did dislike a 'long Latin name,' was that a crime? A man, I hope, is not to be blamed for preferring a short Scriptural English

word to a long Latin one not used in Scripture. It appears from Dr. Coke's sermon that he used both the terms, but preferred the Latin one, and the Conference afterwards advised that any preacher should take his choice.

"In regard to the word bishop in our English Bibles, if I recollect right, Dr. Watts, in his logic, conjectures that it is a Saxon corruption of the Greek word for which it stands in the translation, formed by omitting the vowel *e* and changing *p* into *b*,—a common case in the old language; in Saxon perhaps pronounced *biscop* by abbreviating the Greek termination, hence softening the word into modern English *bishop*, overseer, or superintendent. Now suppose that when Mr. O'Kelly became the head of a party he had called himself by the Greek name presbyter, or by the Latin name senator, and after two years, disliking the Latin or Greek name, should have proposed to his fraternity to call him by the English word elder, would it be proper to call such an alteration in a word or name the beginning of his 'spurious ecclesiastical republicanism?'

"Vindication, page 11: 'We come now to the place of Mr. Wesley's expulsion from the Methodist Episcopal Connexion. In the Reply (page 15) the proctor acknowledges this dreadful act.' I do not find anything like an acknowledgment of 'this dreadful act' in the Reply. How could Mr. O'Kelly say so? I gave several hints in the Reply which I hoped would have induced Mr. O'Kelly not to renew this subject; but instead of being satisfied, I find he has taken up about four pages of the Vindication on this subject. Vindication, page 14: 'The whole process of the case,' (that is, Wesley's expulsion.) Nay, 'Wesley's expulsion' was not 'carried through the Conference' nor anywhere else. Mr. Wesley was never expelled from the Methodist Episcopal Church. The proposal which was made by Bishop Asbury and agreed to by the Manikentown Conference, and the process and the termination of the plan of the Fluvanna Conference were transmitted by Mr. Asbury to Mr. Wesley when the war ended in the acknowledgment of American independence.

"Dr. Coke was despatched to America with authority to establish an independence, on the hierarchy of the Church of England, by ordaining the American preachers, &c. Mr. Asbury would accept of no powers from the doctor without the consent and choice of the preachers who were called to meet in Conference. Among the rules offered by the doctor was one designed to preserve the future union between the British and American Methodists. Mr. Asbury objected to it, in the form it was proposed, as unreasonable and highly improper; he thought, as the societies in America had continued for a number of years without any such obligation, to require it immediately after the peace would be attended with unhappy political consequences, as it was a well-known circumstance that Mr. Wesley had written in favour of the British ministry: but the doctor

contended for it, and Mr. Asbury agreed to submit if it met with the approbation of the preachers. The obligation being laid before the Conference, met with opposition; but it passed in the form in which it was printed in the minutes. See page 2, question 2: 'What can be done in order to preserve the future union of the Methodists? Answer. During the life of the Rev. Mr. Wesley we acknowledge ourselves his sons in the gospel, ready in matters belonging to Church government to obey his commands. And we do engage, after his death, to do everything we judge consistent with the cause of religion in America, and the political interests of these States, to preserve and promote our union with the Methodists in Europe.' The first and only effect of this obligation was the nomination of Richard Whatcoat for a superintendent. Mr. Wesley could not *positively* appoint him; for notwithstanding the acknowledgment, the same Conference made a rule (see Minutes, page 11,) that 'no person shall be ordained a *superintendent* without the consent of a majority of the Conference.'

"Mr. Asbury consented to receive Mr. Whatcoat, as did the Charleston Conference. At Rough Creek the appointment first met with opposition, and, according to Mr. O'Kelly and Dr. Coke, they were the principal parties in the dispute. The doctor, no doubt, contended for the rule to obey Mr. Wesley. Now what arguments could Mr. O'Kelly make use of but such as would go directly to renounce Mr. Wesley's authority? He tells us, indeed, that he argued against the nomination from the consideration that two heads would make two bodies—an argument altogether worthy of Mr. O'Kelly. A correct mind would have said *three*, and then fact could be opposed to show the fallacy of the proposition. Dr. Coke and Mr. Asbury did not make two bodies.

"The Baltimore Conference, which was that year the largest and most respectable in the connexion, being specially called, and consisting of all the preachers who chose to attend, was much more spirited and resolute in their opposition. Dr. Coke sat as *president* and made the proposal of Richard Whatcoat according to Mr. Wesley's orders. It was asked if they were called upon to ratify the appointment implicitly, or to vote discretionally and according to their own judgments. This involved a very serious question. Dr. Coke insisted upon the minute to obey Mr. Wesley. On the other hand, it was asserted that the Methodist societies had been declared a separate body; that the Conference had established a rule for voting, and precluded from the *superintendency* any person who should not have a majority of votes for that important office; and that being circumstanced as they were, it would be attended with less evil to renounce the minute by which they had agreed to obey Mr. Wesley, than to give up the right of voting, as one or the other must follow by consequence. The vote was at length taken—not whether Mr. Wesley should be expelled from the

Methodist Episcopal Church, but whether the conference ought not to reject the agreement to obey Mr. Wesley in *all* matters belonging to Church government? The question was carried, and the conference thus declared that they would not implicitly obey Mr. Wesley, or any other man; the minute was rejected, and as the conference saw no want of a third superintendent at the time, they refused to elect one.

"Had Mr. Wesley come to America the connexion would have received him with open arms, and, I suppose, all the preachers, except one, who has such an antipathy against 'Englishman human heads,' &c., would have rejoiced in the opportunity of acknowledging themselves 'dear Wesley's' sons in the gospel. How many conferences does Mr. O'Kelly suppose there were in 1787? If there was treachery in not carrying the case through all the conferences, why not lay the blame upon Dr. Coke, 'he being senior.' Surely if the doctor could overrule and have a General Conference appointed at the request of Mr. O'Kelly and friends, he could overrule and prevent Mr. Wesley from being expelled in the way the Apology and Vindication say he was. But 'Dr. Coke' and 'Mr. Wesley' blamed Mr. Asbury, *not* because 'he had taken a few chosen men, and in a clandestine manner expelled John, whose surname was Wesley, from the Methodist Episcopal Church.' O no! they never thought him guilty of such conduct. Dr. Coke blamed Mr. Asbury for the time being in the hurry, because he did not stir up a hornet's nest. He thought that Mr. Asbury ought to have done more than consent to receive Mr. Whatcoat—that he could have exerted his influence with the preachers to let the printed obligation remain.

"Mr. Asbury was the only English preacher who adopted the American country, and was determined to stand or fall with the cause of independence; all the rest returned, and one, at least, was not very well affected towards him and Mr. Asbury's intentions; and Mr. Wesley was requested to keep a watchful eye over the great water. When the news went to England that the American preachers had refused to elect Mr. Whatcoat, one of the preachers who had been upon the continent was not backward in declaring that 'he was a true prophet, and that "Frank Asbury,"' so he called him, 'was at the bottom of the whole business.' Dr. Coke, upon his return to Europe, made matters more plain, and Mr. Wesley wrote to Mr. Asbury blaming him for not rising up and declaring that unless the preachers would continue to acknowledge the printed obligation he would leave the continent.

"Now, if I might be allowed to show my opinion, I should blame Mr. Asbury and the conference for ever consenting to obey Mr. Wesley in any matter respecting Church government, contrary to their own judgment, and should applaud them for renouncing the obligation; and, indeed, it appears to me that this very circumstance will bear very hard upon Mr.

O'Kelly's sincerity. If he is really such an enemy to British influence as he pretends to be, why does he endeavour to fix so much blame upon the rejection of Mr. Wesley's unlimited authority over the Methodist connexion in America? As for the talk in the Vindication about the ideal expulsion, some persons, for aught I know, may think it witty and pretty, but unhappily it wants foundation; it is like building castles, and houses, and fields in the air. There are some apparent mistakes upon this subject which need rectifying.

"Mr. Wesley had recommended the episcopal form of Church government which admits of grades of office.

"The Conference having sanctioned the episcopal mode of government, chosen the superintendents, and made a few general rules in addition to those parts of the general minutes which they adopted, they dissolved their sitting without making any rule for a succeeding meeting of a like nature. The work soon spread beyond the expectation of the most sanguine. The societies became large and numerous, and a number of active and zealous young men were found among them, who soon displayed gifts and graces adequate for the work of the ministry. Mr. Asbury being looked up to on all occasions, was overburdened with care and labour. A constitution naturally tender began to sink beneath the weight of constant fatigue and application, and to heighten his difficulties he discovered the appearance of some of the first principles of a schism, which, if carried into effect, must divide the connexion, and destroy the travelling plan.

"The work was very prosperous in all the counties south of James River; and among the preachers who became conspicuous in that revival, perhaps none attracted more general attention than Mr. James O'Kelly. Many circumstances contributed to favour his popularity. Indulged by the superintendent, his station was much more permanent than any other preacher's; forward on all occasions to assert his own consequence; naturally sanguine in his temper, and all glowing with zeal for the 'unparalleled blessed Methodism,' he was a chief among the young preachers; nor had he less influence over the people, whose passions were generally susceptible and exquisite.

"It was among this people that Mr. O'Kelly laboured, first as a circuit preacher, and afterwards as a presiding elder. The societies in general were in their first love, and so much engaged in devotion as to have but little inclination for criticism. As there were but few elders, the presiding elder was followed everywhere by crowds of hearers. In many places the ordinances could not be administered for the want of elders. Mr. Asbury could not help seeing that something must be done; but he thought to call the preachers from the extremities of the connexion to a General Conference would have been attended with almost insuperable difficulties. Many of the societies would have been left in their infant



state for weeks or months without a preacher, the number of local preachers then being very small. •

“In the hurry of incessant and complicated labour and care, Mr. Asbury fixed upon the plan and recommended the *council*.

“It met accordingly, and having proceeded to business, Mr. O’Kelly, who was one of the council, submitted a manuscript to obtain consent to have it published; but it was disapproved, and he felt sensibly on this occasion; and being displeased, he became a violent opposer of the council.

“Things soon began to wear a different aspect, and a less discerning mind than Mr. Asbury’s might have seen that matters were drawing to a crisis. Mr. O’Kelly still maintained, in a great measure, his popularity in his district; but frequently incidents transpired which served to develop hidden principles, and fix the great outlines of his character. He administered discipline with a high hand in almost every part of his district. Complaints were murmured of his precipitate and violent excommunications. Mr. Asbury’s borders were continually extending in every direction. The council business was embarrassed. Letters began to be circulated, and public conversations were frequently about the spirit of the times. So many circumstances combined, that it was no longer a matter of doubt what part Mr. O’Kelly meant to act. It was easy to be seen that he never meant to quit Virginia. No alternative would be accepted but a General Conference under the auspices of Dr. Coke. Inflammatory letters were despatched in various directions. However, when the General Conference met, every question that came before them was determined by a majority. One fair trial here fixed the strength of the parties. It was so in this instance. A motion was made for an appeal,\* which was lost by a great majority. Mr. O’Kelly was now convinced that he had not the influence which he expected in the General Conference. He found that he could not carry his measures; the mortification and disappointment was too great for one so unaccustomed to contradiction: he, therefore, refused a submission to the General Conference, and withdrew himself from the ‘Union.’ Hence, it appears that nothing would satisfy him, excepting the Conference would be ruled and governed by him. He now fell out with the Conference, as he had done before with the council. Now, from this view of the subject, one may obtain a pretty correct notion of the transactions of Mr. O’Kelly, respecting the bishop, the council, the General Conference, &c.

“We have already seen that sufficient provision was not made for the government of a growing body. The great defect seems to have been in putting too much duty upon the superintendents. The strongest governments are those in which power is most properly divided, and placed in

\* An appeal by a preacher against his appointment by the bishop.

the hands of those who are the best qualified to administer it. Mr. Asbury seems to have been placed in the situation of a father over a number of men, some of whom felt none of the relative ties of a son, and were men aspiring at an independence of the authority of the bishop, which he held by the suffrage of the Conference."

"No man could see, no man could feel the difficulties under which the connexion laboured, so well as Mr. Asbury; for no man could take the same view of it, and hear the same complaints. To his grief he heard the loudest complaints from Mr. O'Kelly's district. The plan of the council, which was adopted to save the connexion from the threatening danger, appeared defective, and did not remedy the existing evils; at most, it only gave temporary relief. Nothing but a General Conference could give satisfaction. Had Mr. O'Kelly in this aimed at uniting the preachers and preserving the connexion, he had done a good work."

"When Mr. O'Kelly insisted upon a General Conference, he insisted upon a good thing, but in an improper spirit, and for wrong ends, as the sequel plainly proved. Mr. Asbury sought the welfare of the travelling connexion; and wished to do something, if possible, to unite the preachers, that they might stand upon rules, and not upon the passions of men. Mr. O'Kelly sought his own will and glory, and wanted to spend his life somewhere not far from the banks of the Roanoke; otherwise where his self-will or popularity might direct him."

"The General Conference happily hit upon the means and end both. The connexion then first felt its real strength; and to their praise, they used it with great wisdom, firmness, and moderation. They determined that no elder should reside in any one district for more than four years successively; and thereby prevented any future attempt to secure a perpetual presidency in a favourite district. The General Conference was convinced by painful experience that the bishops and annual conferences were not able to provide against the evils in which the connexion might be involved: therefore a succeeding Conference was appointed to meet at the expiration of four years. In the mean time Mr. O'Kelly exerted his unremitted efforts to divide the classes, and disaffect the preachers in his old district: nevertheless, to his great mortification, the bonds of union grew stronger; he could not succeed agreeably to his wishes. This was owing, probably, to two causes:—First. During the last years of his presidency he had ruled as with a rod of iron; his oppressive hand was severely felt; and the people soon saw the difference between his administration and that of his successor. Second. When Mr. O'Kelly began to form societies, he courted the favour of those over whom he had lorded it; and even admitted into his connexion backsliders whom he himself had excluded from the Methodist Church."

"These are facts too glaring to be denied. Many who had been well

affected to the man were forced to see those inconsistencies, and were astonished, and convinced that his motives were not pure."

"Any one who reads Mr. O'Kelly's account of Methodism might conclude, without better information, that the 'old' Methodists were a people destitute of all written rules, and that through the influence of Mr. Asbury the present Methodists are embarrassed and fettered with new rules calculated to destroy their liberty: which conclusion would be erroneous. The fact is, those alterations which have taken place, have tended directly to give greater privileges to local preachers and private members. The excellencies of old Methodism, which Mr. O'Kelly endeavoured to destroy, have been preserved by the General Conference, which we hope will be a body of sufficient influence to continue the union."

"Vindication, page 38, 'Mr. Hammet, formerly a Methodist minister, gives us an original letter of Mr. Wesley's, written to his friend. It appears that this letter was written to Mr. Beverly Allen. This is the man whom Mr. O'Kelly calls his "friend." What a friend! The reader may judge how little dependence is to be put upon a letter written in answer to erroneous information received from such a source of friendship. The unsuspicious Mr. Wesley, not aware of any envious or insidious designs in his correspondent, wrote to Mr. Allen under an impression received from wrong information. This letter was given to Mr. Hammet. Mr. O'Kelly seems to unite in this astonishing scheme of friendship, and, like Joab's friendship to Abner, uses this letter as a spear, to stab the character of Mr. Asbury and the Conference. What ungenerous insinuations and insidious arts will men make use of to gratify their disappointed ambition! "Come, see my zeal for the Lord," said Jehu, when his leading motive was to effect his own ambitious and selfish purpose.'"

## REVIEW OF THE REFORM CONTROVERSY.

MESSRS. EDITOR,—As you are about to bring your labours to a close, will you permit one who has taken a deep interest in the controversy which has chiefly occupied your columns, and looked from the beginning with no ordinary anxiety to the result, to take a cursory retrospect of the struggle through which we have passed, and mark a few of the leading incidents in its history.

It will be recollected, that in the commencement of the conflict, those who set up for reformers, contented themselves with assailing existing institutions without offering any plan or form of government in their stead. In vain we asked them what they desired to do or to have done. They had agreed to destroy the superstructure which had been erected by our fathers, but it seems they had not yet agreed among themselves upon even the outline of the building which was to be erected upon its ruins; yet they vehemently insisted that we should pull down the old house, and live in the woods until a new one could be raised.

The only idea which seemed to be held in common by the reformers was, that we should take for the model of our ecclesiastical polity the civil institutions of our happy country. And it was chiefly the deep-rooted attachment of every American citizen to the political government under which he lived, that gave currency and success to the efforts of those who proposed to fashion our Church economy after the same model. The republicanism of the proposal was worth a thousand arguments; for it could not fail to reach the heart, and every one knows how much the judgment is biassed by the affections. The torrent would have been irresistible, had it not been met by a counteracting tide of affection for those religious institutions which had enabled our predecessors to spread the gospel through the length and breadth of this good land, and to bring thousands under its redeeming and saving influences, in spite of the difficulties which, in addition to the ordinary impediments which are found in all countries, and at all times, were presented by the immense extent and sparseness of our population. Between those two opposing impulses, we had time to pause and consider the question, Whether the institutions best adapted to the ends of civil government were equally proper for effecting the objects contemplated by religious associations. The investigation resulted in a firm and abiding conviction, that the nature and objects of civil and ecclesiastical governments were of necessity so dis-

similar, that the institutions of one formed no safe or useful model for the other. We do not pretend that all have entered into this inquiry and deduced this conclusion by the process we have pointed out. On the contrary, we believe that a large proportion of the Methodist community have given but little attention to the speculations on either side of the controversy. They have remained steadfast in their attachment to our government and discipline, because of the great amount of good which had been effected under their provisions, and because the evils anticipated by reformers had never been felt. They judged the tree by its fruit, and were satisfied.

Meantime, there were found enlisted under the banners of reform all who desired distinction and pre-eminence, which they saw could only be attained by a revolution. Among these, and in the foremost rank, were some who had formerly been popular and useful travelling preachers, but who, having grown weary of the toils and privations of an itinerant life, had located, but who still pined after the distinction and influence they had enjoyed when actively engaged in the great missionary work. These found means to enlist many of the local preachers in their schemes who had never travelled; and, finally, when they found the aid of the laity necessary to the accomplishment of their projects, they suddenly became the peculiar friends of the people, and liberty and equality became the constant theme of many, and of some, too, whose arbitrary and tyrannical conduct, when formerly clothed with a little brief authority, had been the scandal and the grief of the Church.

Sanguine of success, the revolutionary project was urged on by means which not only violated the obligations of Christian brotherhood, but which were prohibited by the comity of civilized life. But writers and speakers supplied by invective and abuse what was wanting in argument, and all who hesitated to enter into the visionary measures of the levellers were denounced either as tyrants or the slaves of tyrants. The most strenuous efforts were made by the writers in the periodical paper devoted to the cause of reform, to alienate the membership from the travelling preachers, and, of course, nothing was left undone which could render them odious in the estimation of the Church and of the world.

They were represented as exercising a domination as cruel and unrelenting as the Druids, and as claiming the infallibility of Popery itself. To support these allegations cases were cited which, by suppressing part of the facts and circumstances, and discolouring the remainder, and eluding detection by giving only certain initial letters for the names of the parties, led their readers to hate itinerant preachers as the common enemy of mankind. Indeed, it was pretty clearly insinuated that they were dangerous to the civil liberties of the country, as they aimed at an ultimate political supremacy, and held the membership in such absolute

slavery as to be able to use them, whenever their numerical force should justify the attempt, as the willing instruments of their elevation to supreme power.

It will hardly be credited by posterity, that men who had been fostered in the bosom of Methodism,—who had been taken from the lowest and most illiterate ranks of society, and raised to distinction in the Church, and social elevation in the community, by its influence,—should have represented its institutions as having a tendency to debase and enslave the human mind, and its founders and martyrs as being the veriest cheats and impostors that ever disgraced the world. And, indeed, nothing but the baneful influence of party spirit, now inflamed by the hope of success, and again maddened by the apprehension of defeat and mortification, can afford a parallel to such enormity of ingratitude and recklessness of character.

This violence, however—as violence often does—defeated its own purpose. The membership, who from their infancy had been acquainted with itinerant preachers, were disgusted with the caricature which had been given of them by those who pretended to be reformers, and became indignant at the slander which was periodically poured forth against them, through the press and the pulpit. They rose in their might and demanded justice against the perpetrators of these offences, and justice was done. The offenders were either cut off from Church fellowship or withdrew, and with them, we regret to say, many of their deluded followers. Nearly four years have elapsed since the separation, and ample time has been allowed to our great reformers to show to the world what they intended to do for the Methodist Episcopal Church, had they been permitted; and the result is, that they have demonstrated beyond all doubt what we had before suspected—namely, that had we admitted half their innovations we should have been irretrievably ruined. Our itinerancy would have been subverted, and a congregational government instituted. We should have lost our missionary character, and with it the extensive usefulness which even our enemies have attributed to our ministry. A succession of electioneering strife and contention would have converted even our class-meetings into the arenas of battle, and the greatest evil that could have befallen a young convert would have been to be admitted into one of these classes. Our general superintendency, and with it the confederacy of our conferences, would have been dissolved at a single blow, and the Church, broken up into fragments, could have united in no common effort or plan of usefulness, and nothing would have remained to us but the empty name of Republican Methodists, while the former glory would have forever departed from the Church.

But the best of all is, God has been, and is still, with us. The boast-

ings of our enemies have been vain. No weapon formed against us has been suffered to prosper. We had been confidently assured by our adversaries that the itinerancy were divided upon the question of reform, and that the East and the North would be arrayed against the South and the West. The trial came, and, except a solitary deserter here and there, the itinerancy remained firm in their attachment to the institutions of our fathers. Differing in opinion upon some minor matters, they felt their pastoral obligations too strongly to entertain for a moment the thought of rending the body of Christ for mere speculative opinions; and we believe that at no period of our history did there prevail more universal love, and harmony both in opinion and object, than now exists among our ministry, both travelling and local, throughout the whole field of labour in America and Europe. Nor has their success ever been greater than since the secession of our disaffected members. The minutes of conference, for the last four years, show an increase, both of ministers and members, unparalleled in the history of Methodism; while before us the prospect opens with increasing brightness and glory. The crucible of investigation through which our institutions have been made to pass has only tested their utility, and occasioned them to be more highly appreciated; and the whole body will hereafter cleave to them with purpose of heart, as a bond of union and strength which no effort of our adversaries can rend asunder.

We had been told that the spirit of reform had pervaded the great body of the membership, and that "whole classes, by scores and hundreds, were ready to secede." The trial came, and what was the catastrophe? Even here, in the very metropolis of reform, some two hundred were expelled or withdrew. A large proportion of these were females, whose relation to the leading men among reformers necessarily urged them to the measure.

In a Church containing six thousand members the seceders were scarcely missed, and their departure only regretted on their own account. And never, since the organization of the Church in Baltimore, have we enjoyed greater prosperity than during the period which has elapsed since our disaffected brethren left our communion. God has abundantly blessed us with peace and concord, while he has added continually to our numbers, beyond any former example. To him be the glory, for in the Lord Jehovah is all our strength and all our hope. We might add, that all our information from abroad goes to assure us that our adversaries have done us as little harm elsewhere as in Baltimore. Indeed in most places they have not been felt at all; and where they have succeeded in any degree, the impression is passing away, and will shortly be forgotten, or only remembered as a monitory lesson against the ever-restless spirit of innovation.

The frequent divisions in Christian Churches suggest a question which every professor of religion is bound to consider, and which it seems is seldom reflected upon by most who separate themselves from the Churches with whom they have been in communion. The question is, Can a follower of Christ righteously separate from the Church of which he is a member, for any other than conscientious reasons; that is, without being required to believe some doctrine which he cannot believe, or to do or suffer something which he cannot conscientiously do or suffer? Such were the causes which produced the reformation effected by Luther and his coadjutors; and some of these causes also compelled the separation of the Methodists in America from the Church in England. We have not time to discuss this question, but we will take occasion to say before it is answered in the affirmative, we ought to inquire whether mere matters of opinion ever produced secession in the Church during the time in which she was blessed with the direction of the apostles?

It will be recollected that Paul and Peter differed at Antioch about a very important point of discipline. Paul contended that the Gentile converts should not be compelled to submit to the requirements of the ceremonial law of Moses; while Peter, though he was the first of the apostles who was sent to the Gentiles, thought it prudent to indulge the prejudices of his countrymen, and subject the Gentiles to Jewish observances. But, although Paul withstood him to the face, and charges him with dissimulation, we hear nothing of their setting up two Churches at Antioch. The question, though vastly important, yet involved no essential principle of Christian faith, and therefore every one was required to be fully persuaded in his own mind, and to act accordingly. It was a question of discipline, not of faith; and, therefore, was mere matter of opinion, not of conscience; but we wonder how long a matter of such importance would be agitated in a modern Christian Church, before we should hear from one side or the other, the cry of "To your tents, O Israel!" Yet, if it was wrong in primitive times, it is equally wrong now to divide Churches for any other cause than an inability to comply with the requisitions of the Church with a good conscience.

If the seceders from our Church upon simple questions of discipline, have not heretofore inquired whether the act could be justified upon Christian principles, we hope they will yet think of it, and we now leave them to their own reflections.



TO THE PUBLIC.

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I AVAIL myself of the last number of the *Itinerant* to say something of myself and the part I have taken in the unhappy controversy which has so long, and, I will add, so unnecessarily agitated the Methodist Episcopal Church. Aware that it is hardly ever safe for a man to speak of himself, or his own personal concerns, nothing but a sense of duty could impel me to the performance of a task as unpleasant to me as it may be uninteresting to my readers. The task has been postponed until the last opportunity offered by our periodical paper is ready to pass away, and a similar one is not likely to occur. It is hoped that the readers of the *Itinerant* will not complain if a few columns of the paper should be occupied in the vindication of one who has heretofore disregarded the personal attacks of the common adversary, and devoted himself exclusively to the defence of the Church.

Few men, even among the wise and the good, bear opposition patiently; but when ambition and party spirit enter into their plans, every opponent becomes an enemy, who, if he cannot be answered, must be ruined; or at least his arguments must be deprived of all the favour which a fair reputation would bespeak for them. Accordingly the humble efforts which I have made to preserve the institutions of a Church in which I have been nurtured from my youth, have brought upon me the fiercest wrath of her enemies, and I have been slandered and misrepresented in all quarters without restraint or decency. It is true that this was in some measure anticipated when I entered into the controversy; but having made up my mind to enlist for the war, nothing remained but to do my duty and abide the consequences. In the dedication of the *Appeal*, I told Mr. Snethen: "You have, however, done me one essential service by your remarks. You have taught me to count the cost of this undertaking—the friendships it will dissolve, and the animosities it will awaken. I am free to confess that the fearful aggregate is appalling. To a Christian it must be a painful sacrifice of feeling, and to a professional man a sacrifice of interest. For I am aware, that in controversies, the friendships which grow out of a similarity of views and unity of effort, subside with the occasion which gives rise to them; while the enmities awakened remain after the cause of the contest shall have long passed away. Nothing but a firm conviction of duty could have induced me to write: and he who hesitates between duty and inclination is undone." But forewarned as I

was of the consequences of my temerity in entering into the controversy, I made a very inadequate estimate of them. The personal animosity evinced by my opponents has transcended all calculation; and if I am yet able to provide for a large and helpless family, it is in despite of their utmost efforts to prevent it. I do not, however, regret the course I have taken, because my conscience approves it as imposed by my duty to God and the Church, and I have learned not "to fear them that can kill the body, and after that have nothing more that they can do; but to fear Him who, after he hath killed the body, can cast both soul and body into hell."

I shall not disgust the reader with any account of the private mischief or injuries which have been done, or intended me, by some reformers in this city and elsewhere. One of the wickedest and most malicious of these enemies I have spared from public shame and contempt, when he was completely in my power, through pity for him and respect for his worthy family; and the rest I shall leave to their own consciences, and to Him who hath said, "Vengeance is mine, and I will repay." It is my intention only to notice some of the principal charges which have been brought against me through the press, and to show that they are as unjust as they were intended to be injurious.

The first accusation in order of time, is, that I am "a deserter from the cause of reform." This was more than insinuated by Mr. Snethen in the *Mutual Rights*, as soon as he heard of my intention to write in defence of the Church. It has been positively asserted by one, and reiterated in effect by many correspondents in the same paper, and finally the late editor accuses me of falsehood for denying it, and attempts to prove the allegation by quoting a memorial to the General Conference of 1824, to which my name is affixed as secretary to the meeting from which the memorial emanated. Of this memorial I will speak presently, but would previously state fairly and fully how far I ever went as a reformer.

My readers will recollect that for a long time the only question which agitated the Church was, whether the rule in our Discipline which directs the mode of selecting the presiding elders should or should not be altered. I admit that I did incline to the proposed alteration, and favoured the plan provided by what are generally known as the "suspended resolutions;" and in this view I only coincided with a majority of the bishops, and at one time with at least three-fourths of the General Conference which passed the resolutions. It is true that a majority of the same Conference did afterwards suspend the operation of these resolutions for four years, and that the last General Conference finally repealed them; but I had no more to do in their suspension or repeal than I had in their original adoption. This is the utmost extent to which I ever went in reform, except that I always have insisted that our economy ought

more explicitly to define and provide for the Church relation of children baptized by our ministry.

But to justify the charge of desertion, it ought to be shown that I had at least changed my opinions in regard to the above-mentioned alterations in our Discipline, if I have not actually opposed them. This, however, is not the fact; I have never intimated any change of opinion in this respect, nor have I seen any good reason to change it. It is true I do not consider them of so much importance as to justify altercation or strife among brethren. We aim at the same object, and shall agree as to the best means of accomplishing it when they become equally apparent to all. In the mean time we must patiently wait for the direction of Divine Providence, preserving the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; but in regard to myself, I aver that I have not renounced any opinion in regard to the matters alluded to, or any other principle which I have advocated at any time during this controversy. The charge of desertion, therefore, is wholly untrue.

It may however be asserted that I deserted reformers, if I did not desert reform. I answer that the reformers deserted me. They formed a "Union Society" which organized party spirit, and established a paper which advocated principles to which I had been always opposed. From this combination I did not withdraw, for I never entered it. I never deserted the advocates of lay or local delegation, for I never was with them. Neither can I be charged with deserting the M'Cainites, for I never enlisted in the war against the episcopacy or the episcopal form of government. On the contrary, I have uniformly and steadily expressed the opinion that this feature of our economy was essential to the prosperity and even the preservation of the Methodist Church in this country. With what propriety, then, can I be called "a deserter from reform?" The leading principle of reformers will be admitted to have been, a direct representation from the laity and local preachers in the General Conference. That I have always been opposed to this, all the principal reformers of our city know, if they would testify; yet the late editor of the *Mutual Rights* charges me with advocating a lay delegation, and adduces in proof of it the memorial heretofore mentioned.

As this memorial is the only proof relied on, it may be well to give some explanation of my connexion with it. In the interval between the General Conferences of 1820 and 1824, the subject of reform excited great interest here, and in many other parts of the country. It will be remembered that some of our oldest and most respectable brethren had been led to suspect all who advocated the change in reference to the appointment of presiding elders, as entertaining ulterior views more dangerous to the Church than even this much-dreaded measure. In conformity with these opinions, they got up a memorial to the Conference, which many who advo-

cated the change thought did them great injustice,—and a meeting was called of all parties, which met at the Conference-room, over the parsonage, in Light-street. This meeting appointed a committee to draft a memorial to the Conference, expressive of their *real* views; and the committee were required to report at an adjourned meeting. The committee consisted of Thomas Kelso, David Harryman, Lambert Thomas, John J. Harrod, and myself. Of these, Messrs. Thomas and Harrod were in favour of claiming a lay delegation to the General Conference as the *right* of the membership. I do not recollect whether Mr. Harryman expressed his views upon this occasion or not; but Mr. Kelso and myself were opposed to a lay delegation altogether. In this state of parties a compromise was proposed, and it was finally agreed that the advocates of lay delegation should explicitly abandon the claim of right, and ask for a delegation on the ground of expediency only,—in which case they would, of course, be permitted to say whatever they could say to prove the utility of the measure. I was appointed to write the memorial, and it was written in conformity with this compromise. That part of the memorial which relates to representation is as follows:—

“Under these views, we have been led to turn our attention to the subject of a lay delegation to the General Conference. In presenting this subject to your consideration, we would *wave all that might be urged on the natural or abstract right of the membership to this privilege. We are content to admit that all governments, whether civil or ecclesiastical, ought to be founded, not on considerations growing out of abstract rights, but on expediency; that being always the right government which best secures the interests of the whole community.* With regard to the expediency of the measure, then, we may urge that such a delegation would bring into the Conference much information with regard to the temporal affairs of the Church, which the ministry cannot well be supposed to possess. They would feel less delicacy in originating and proposing measures for the relief of the preachers’ families than the preachers themselves, as they could not be subjected thereby to the imputation of interested motives; and they would, by being distributed everywhere among the membership, aid, by their personal exertions and influence, the success of such measures, and awaken more generally than has hitherto been done the attention of the Methodist community to the great interests of the Church.

“We are aware of the constitutional objections to this change in our economy. We know that you are clearly prohibited, by the very first article of the constitution under which you act, from adding to the Conference any delegation not provided for in that rule; but we believe that an opinion expressed by the Conference, and approved by the episcopacy, would induce the annual conferences to make the necessary alteration in the constitution; and we submit the consideration of the whole matter to

the calm and deliberate attention which we are persuaded its importance demands, and which we do not doubt it will receive, *determined cheerfully and cordially to submit to your decision.*"

It will be perceived that the memorialists not only wave the claim of "right," but admit all governments, whether civil or ecclesiastical, ought to be founded exclusively on expediency, or utility; and they promise, after submitting their reasons for a change, cheerfully to abide the decision of the Conference. How well some of them kept their promise is well known; but perhaps it is not as well known as it ought to be, that all the principal reformers in the city were present at the meeting to which the report of the committee was submitted, and voted for the memorial! For myself, I obtained all I wished for. I had no objection to the advocates of lay delegation presenting to the Conference their reasons for desiring the privilege, but I always objected to any changes predicated on abstract rights; because, if once begun, there was no foreseeing the amount of speculative innovation to which it might lead. But if I am accused of being an advocate of lay delegation because I voted for this memorial, what must be said of the reformers who voted for it? Does it not contain principles which they now renounce as heretical beyond all human endurance? But if they allege that they voted for the memorial because it was the best they could get, I answer, so did I; and I cheerfully submit to the reader's decision who had the best of the bargain.

The next charge to be considered is the one which was made by an anonymous writer in the *Mutual Rights*, over the signature of "Vindex."\* The charge is, that I was secretary to my Lord of Canterbury's Star-Chamber Court, in the trial of Dennis B. Dorsey.

By the Star-Chamber Court he is understood to mean the Baltimore Annual Conference, and by my Lord of Canterbury, a venerable member of that body,† whose age and acknowledged usefulness ought to have protected him from this rude attack. I shall not attempt to give even a profile of this aged minister's character; but I will say of him, he was never known to desert a friend in his need, either through cowardice or selfishness. Vindex knows who *has* done so. He knows who, under a fictitious signature, blustered most valorously in favour of Mr. Dorsey, but who turned craven when in the General Conference he had a fair opportunity to defend him. He knows who quailed before this very Lord of Canterbury, when, on the floor of the General Conference, he replied to Mr. Dorsey's Appeal, and held up Mr. "Vindex" to the contempt he had so justly earned. Moral courage is thought by some to be a natural endowment, and therefore he who wants it is not to be reproached but pitied; yet we cannot help feeling some degree of contempt for the man who struts and vapours when out of reach of danger, and declines the combat

\* Rev. Henry B. Bascom.

† The Rev. Stephen G. Roszell.

when it is offered. Vindex calls me the "pugnacious secretary of the prosecuting committee." Be it so; but he cannot charge me with stabbing my adversary in the dark, or with betraying or forsaking my friends.

When in the dedication to the Appeal I alluded to Vindex's accusation, that I had conducted or aided in the prosecution of D. B. Dorsey, I did not deny the charge, lest it should imply a disapprobation of the proceedings of the conference in the case; but my views of the matter having been long since before the public, let Vindex now learn that the accusation is wholly false. So far from having any agency in the matter, I did not even hear of the proceedings until a few hours before the final decision of the case. The gentleman whom he calls "my Lord of Canterbury" had never spoken to me on the subject; nor had I exchanged a word with him on any subject, except in the presence of Mr. Harrod—one of the reformers—during the whole conference. What apology can he make, therefore, for having, under a fictitious signature, brought an unfounded and railing accusation against a man who had always treated him with marked attention and respect, and from whom he had recently parted in amity? How will he excuse himself for having applied an injurious appellation to me, merely from a gratuitous supposition, which nothing but malignity could engender? Mr. Vindex will find that those whose cause he serves, though they may applaud the treason, will nevertheless despise the traitor.

Dr. Jennings made some silly charges against me in the Mutual Rights, which really were so absurd, and so impossible to be true, that they did not perhaps justify any notice of them; yet I did reply through the Itinerant, and took some pains to convince the doctor of his error. He has, nevertheless, recently published a book, in which the charges are reiterated, without any additional evidence, and no notice whatever is taken of the points in my vindication which are essential to the defence. He will, probably, hear from me again.

Mr. M'Caine, with characteristic zeal, has made me the subject of his theme, both in and out of the pulpit, even while he occupied the enviable station of President of the Virginia Radical Conference. I hope his hearers were as much edified as I have been gratified by the notice taken of me by so great a man. For though Mr. M'Caine "crept to the topmast through the lubber hole," he was a real, not a "spurious" bishop of the "Ancient Dominion," and took pains to introduce me to many great people, who, but for his kind interference, might never have heard of a person of so little consideration in the world. The wonder is, how a man who tells us he really shook hands with the Governor of Virginia could condescend to notice so humble an adversary. But, all joking aside, the president is somewhat excusable for abusing me. It must be allowed that I spoke of

his "History and Mystery," and the spirit in which it was written, in no measured terms. Besides, he was the first to give us a new plan of Church government, which I handled so rudely that it had the misfortune to fall so entirely to pieces that neither himself nor any of his friends have attempted to put it together again, or even to mention it from the day of its dissolution to the present hour. Yet in regard even to Mr. M'Caine I have never travelled out of the record. I have forborne to say anything of his personal character. He has not done so by me, and some have thought I would be justified in retaliating with severity. Indeed, it is generally conceded that when a witness shows prejudice, or passion, or enmity, to either party, it is fair for those who are injured by his testimony to prove him unworthy of credence; but, then, Mr. M'Caine's prejudice, passion, and enmity, are so outrageous, that any impartial jury would refuse to credit him, even upon oath. When he assails my character in distant places, before strangers who have come to hear the gospel, I cannot fail to find an advocate in the honest feelings of his auditory; and the truth is, Mr. M'Caine has, in such instances, done himself irreparable injury, without effecting, in any degree, his malignant object in regard to me.

Every man who has enemies ought to desire them to be just such violent, indiscreet enemies as Mr. M'Caine. Enemies whose malignancy looks out in their countenances, and betrays itself in every word and action, are impotent in exact proportion to their rage. Give them sufficient room and you are safe. But in addition to the moral considerations by which I have been influenced, I have avoided, in the whole of this controversy, any attack upon the private character of those who assailed me, because it really could not possibly be brought to bear on the subject in dispute. The arguments on either side are wholly independent of the personal character of the disputants. If, for instance, I were to descend to personalities, and could show that Mr. M'Caine, while a travelling preacher, used his pastoral authority more for the gratification of his vindictive passions than for the good of his flock; that in his intercourse with both preachers and people he was ever quarrelsome and litigious; that as a friend he was treacherous, and as an enemy vindictive and unrelenting; and that in his domestic relations he was an unfeeling savage,—all this would leave whatever there is of argument or fact in the "History and Mystery" just as it now is. The reader will not understand me to say or insinuate that I *could* prove such things. Mr. M'Caine's late elevation to a presidential dignity will save the reader from any mistake on this subject; but I mean to say, that if I were to prove it, it would be useless labour, as the subjects of controversy would be the same afterwards as before. I shall therefore let Mr. M'Caine pass for just what he is worth in the individual estimation of my readers. If I mistake not, that estima-

tion is too well settled here and elsewhere to be hereafter lowered by blame or exalted by panegyric.

I cannot notice all the reformers who have vented their spite against me through the Mutual Rights, and its legitimate offspring in Cincinnati. The reader's patience would be exhausted, and the remaining columns of the Itinerant filled before I should be half done. It may, however, be proper, once for all, to put my readers on their guard against one of the stratagems of those who assail either my personal character or my writings. They are in the habit of pretending to quote passages from what I have written, while they really give what I never wrote or thought. The honest reader will, therefore, do me the justice always to consult the original before he credits the quotation.

Vindex, pretending to quote from my dedication of the Appeal, alleges that I assert the Star Chamber Court never took cognizance of ecclesiastical matters. I had said no such thing; yet he vapours away with his authorities to prove what never was and never could be controverted. It is true I had asserted that "the Star Chamber was a civil, not an ecclesiastical tribunal;" but everybody knows that civil courts, even in this country, take cognizance of ecclesiastical matters. That the Star Chamber Court was a civil tribunal cannot be disputed. The reader has only to turn to Hume's History of England to see that the court was formed of the king's privy council, and the judges of the civil courts. It is true that an ecclesiastic might be a member of the privy council, and, *consequently*, of the Star Chamber Court; but this incidental circumstance did not change the nature of the court itself,—it was still a civil, not an ecclesiastical tribunal. In England the ministers of the Established Church are often commissioned as justices of the peace; but as justices of the peace they are civil, not ecclesiastical officers. In short, Vindex has changed the proposition, and "made it ridiculous by making it his own."

But a false quotation of a more serious character is given by a writer in the Cincinnati radical paper, which, if true, would have fixed upon me the charge of downright falsehood. It is said, in the "Narrative and Defence," that at the time when I made certain propositions to the Union Society, I had "taken no part *in the measures which had been adopted in reference to the accused.*" This was strictly true: but the writer alluded to above makes me say I had "*previously taken no part in the controversy,*" although I had published the "Appeal to the Methodists" months before these propositions were made; and he triumphs as though he had totally destroyed my reputation. These two instances are fair samples of the candour and fairness of those I have had the fortune to encounter in this memorable controversy. I will trouble the reader with no more of these instances, but only reiterate my caution to be on their guard when-



ever they see what purports to be a quotation from anything I have written on the subject of reform.

It may be asked, Why all this enmity to an individual who has only exercised his "natural right" to defend the Church of which he is a member, against those who assailed her institutions, the character of her founders, and her ministry? I waited long and patiently, in the expectation that our enemies would tire in the strife, or that some one else would appear in the breach; until at length our adversaries demanded a reply, and urged that if we had anything to say in our defence, it was our Christian duty to publish it, that they might be brought to a better mind. Yet, when my intention to write was announced, Mr. Snethen assailed me most furiously, and "let slip all the dogs of war." Within a few days after the publication of the Appeal, one of my most intimate friends told me, while he held the pamphlet in his hand, that he had changed his physician, lest I should take advantage of some opportunity to put him out of the way. The reader must not suppose that the man who said this believed what he said, or that he was naturally of a sour, vindictive temper. On the contrary, he is constitutionally kind and amiable; and so far from being of a morose temper, he is remarkable for his good humour and facetiousness. But he was a heated partisan, and party spirit is wont to assimilate everything to its own likeness. I stood in the way of a favourite, long-cherished scheme, and he could not brook the opposition. If I had no other quarrel with radicalism, I should never forgive it for depriving me of the friendship of John Jolley Harrod. As Prince Hal said of his facetious companion, Falstaff, "I could have better spared a better man."

Let it be remembered, that the enmity which was brought upon me by the "Appeal," was not elicited by the temper in which the pamphlet was written; for my reviewer, Mr. Shinn, presented me his thanks for the good spirit with which I conducted the argument, and holds the work up as an example to all who should afterwards enter the lists of controversy; but it is simply for presuming to oppose the contemplated revolution in our Church; and I have been asked, why I did not *keep quiet*, and let the itinerant preachers defend the government. This, perhaps, would have been the most prudent course, according to the suggestions of worldly policy. My only apology for not adopting it is, that I could not do so with a good conscience. I owed everything I enjoyed to the Methodists. My parents were among the first-fruits of Methodism in this country, and within the pale of its communion they lived and died happy in the Lord. An only sister and an only brother were early brought to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, through the instrumentality of the Methodist ministry, and were nurtured in the bosom of the Methodist Episcopal Church, until they ripened for heaven and entered into their rest. For

myself, I also was taken early in life into fellowship with this people, and owe to them, as instruments in the hands of a good and gracious God, all I enjoy in this world, and all I hope for in the world to come. They watched over me with pious and parental care in my youth. They have borne with my frailties in riper years, and sustained me in my weaknesses, and soothed by their sympathies all the afflictions of my life. And when the destroyer came, could I, without the basest ingratitude, look with calm indifference on the threatened desolation? In the allotment of Providence, I was placed in the most favourable circumstances to learn the true nature of the contemplated revolution, and to discuss, from time to time, with the leading reformers personally, all the subjects connected with their project. No person who was not similarly circumstanced, could have been as well prepared for the controversy. Hence I was led to believe that, though wholly unpractised in such warfare, it was my duty to enter the lists, and I would have done so at the hazard of all earthly possessions and comforts. The result is, that I have received much personal abuse, and incurred the utmost enmity of some whose ambitious projects I have humbly contributed to frustrate; yet I have preserved a good conscience, and am thereby amply compensated. I have lived to see the Church out of danger from the storm which once threatened to uproot all her institutions from their foundations. The clear blue sky is again seen, and the rainbow of divine mercy is again the consolation of Israel. To God be all the glory. "Praise the Lord, O my soul; and forget not thou all his benefits." Let all the people say, Amen!

It only remains to announce to the readers of the *Itinerant*, what is already pretty generally known, that my contributions to its columns will be found over the letters C. L. I. O., and over the signature Philo C. The author's real name was not withheld for disguise or concealment, but simply to avoid the appearance of parade and ostentation. The practice of writing over fictitious signatures is justified by the example of the greatest and best men of this, as well as of former times, and can only be reprehensible when statèments are made, or facts asserted, which require a responsible voucher. I have never concealed my name under such circumstances.

THOMAS E. BOND.



## A P P E N D I X .

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### THE PHILADELPHIA REFORM MOVEMENT.

It is a cause of great gratulation to the Methodist Episcopal Church that the brethren who originated this movement commenced by a repudiation of the "radicalism" of former times; and that the "committee of twenty," and, finally, the "convention," preserved the same plan and feeling. They assume no antagonism between the travelling ministers and the laity and local preachers of the Church, but very justly look upon the present organization as originating from the necessity of circumstances, but which circumstances, they think, have so changed as to require material changes in the governmental regulations of our Church polity. The question of change is, therefore, a question of expediency, or utility, which may be safely discussed, and finally acted upon, without any insurrectionary movement; and if the alterations should be found, upon examination, to be unnecessary, and fraught with danger, they may be given up by their present advocates without any abandonment of principles, or any sense of mortification at the failure of the scheme,—there will be no mortified pride to avenge by secession and the organization of an "opposition line." After due examination, we shall be led to make whatever changes in our polity may be judged necessary or useful by the Methodist community as a whole, including ministry and laity; or, finding no changes in the cardinal principles of our government necessary or safe, we shall be content to wait the openings and leadings of Providence, and in the mean time abide in our calling, individually contributing our share, as we have ability, to the common purpose of Methodist combination and effort—the salvation of the world by the propagation of the gospel, and the building each other up in holiness.

But, had the "radicals" of former times succeeded in effecting their revolutionary purposes, the episcopacy, the right arm of the itinerancy, must have been lopped off; and the itinerant ministers themselves, having been warred with as tyrants, despots—nay, "overbearing, abandoned

tyrants"—so unfeeling, so unrelenting, as "to suffer their flocks to go into sin, and finally into hell, rather than grant them their rights"—the ministers, we say, thus denounced, could only be conquered and subjugated by power, and only be suffered to continue in the community in a state of vassalage, and under strict police regulations. Under such circumstances, the best thing that could have happened to Methodism would have been that the name should have been blotted out, and have passed away from the memory of all men.

The editor of the "Methodist Protestant" has taken great offence at the repudiation of "radicalism" by the brethren engaged in the Philadelphia movement. He insists that their cause is *one* with the heroes of the revolution who instituted the Methodist Protestant Church, and that it was very unkind and unjust to denounce those who had fought and suffered for the same principles. But the editor mistook the views and objects of the reformers of the present time. These have no quarrel with their itinerant ministers—do not denounce them as usurpers of power and prerogative—but "esteem them highly for their work's sake." They have not adopted the "radical" slander with which our episcopacy was assailed as "spurious and fraudulent," "based on falsehood and sustained by forgery." On the contrary, they consider our bishops as true *episcopoi*, their institution well agreeing with the practice of the primitive Church, and essential to the efficiency of our itinerant mode of ministerial operation.

But the editor does not take into view these distinctions. He only looks at the common purpose of a lay delegation, and considers this as identifying the present movement with that which eventuated in the establishment of his denomination. But even in this particular there is so striking a difference in their principles of action as sufficiently distinguishes the one from the other. The "radicals" *claimed* a lay delegation as a matter of right; the present reformers as a matter of expediency or utility, calculated, as they think, to invigorate our itinerant system. The former insisted upon conforming our Church government to the civil institutions of our country; the latter propose no model from without, but only urge such changes as are best suited to the occasion. Consequently, while one claimed changes with vehement railing and fiercer denunciations, with appeals to the world and the political feelings of the citizens, and with threats of disruption or secession, the other calmly appeals to the judgment of the Church for the intrinsic propriety and probable usefulness of the modifications they propose. So that, differing entirely with the radicals in everything else, they only agree with them in proposing lay delegation, while they base the proposition on principles so different as to render all approach toward identification impossible. We pity the editor of the "Methodist Protestant," but really have no consolation to offer him. He will, we think, be disappointed in the expectation of another radical

war in the Methodist Episcopal Church, and consequent accession to his denomination. The Philadelphia brethren did right. They commenced by repudiating "radicalism," and, we believe, they were sincere. Their subsequent proceedings have all been in conformity with their declaration in their primary meeting, at which they called the convention.

Having thus admitted the claim of the brethren engaged in the present reform movement to a patient hearing, and the scheme of reform which they propose to a calm consideration, we shall proceed to examine it without bias or prejudice. In whatever will contribute to the efficiency and usefulness of our Church, we have a common interest with all the ministers and laymen of our fellowship; and we would not object to any proposed changes upon any other grounds than that of their tendency to injure us as a religious community, or that they are uncalled for by any want or exigency of the Church.

The convention petition the General Conference to provide for, and admit into the annual and General Conferences a lay representation, equal in number to the ministers composing the annual conferences, and to the delegates composing the General Conference. We find the preamble and resolutions in the "Philadelphia Christian Advocate," a paper recently established with a view to the discussion of the proposed alterations in our Church government. With respect to this paper, the editor of the Christian Advocate and Journal observes, after some words of commendation, in which we concur: "It is open to the argument on lay delegation, although the editor does not propose to go into the discussion himself. A certain Mr. 'Nedlit' enters the list against Dr. Bond, and probably will take charge of the controversy on the side of the laymen. Brother Tilden may esteem himself extremely fortunate in having secured so able an antagonist to the 'Champion of Methodism as it is.' The old hero will have to look out, or he will soon lose his foothold." Now we apprehend our friend, Dr. Peck, has not shown his usual discernment and editorial sagacity in the above remarks. The editor of the Philadelphia Christian Advocate not only "intends to go into the discussion," but, we opine, has actually entered it over the signature of "Nedlit," for having secured whom as a correspondent the doctor congratulates him. If he will only take the pains to spell the *nom de guerre*, "Nedlit," from right to left—that is, backwards—he will find it to be the name of the editor, "Brother Tilden" himself; and as to his having entered the lists with "Dr. Bond," we have not so understood him. He does indeed assume an antagonist position at the outset, but does not maintain it. He does not aver that Dr. Bond has not shown that the Methodist itinerant preachers are not "aristocrats," and the Church government not "an aristocracy;" but he labours to prove that the government is not a "democracy,"—a position which Dr. Bond is so far from denying, that he

does most religiously pray that it never may become such; conscientiously believing that a democratical ecclesiastical polity would utterly destroy our whole itinerant system, root and branch. The editor and Dr. Bond are, therefore, not opponents, but fully agreed so far. What they may become, when the editor shall come to give our Church government a distinguishing appellation, can now only be a matter of conjecture.

We pass over the preamble, and all the resolutions but those which give the plan by which lay delegation is proposed to be effected. This plan is,—

“*First.* That every circuit or [and] station should be allowed annually, at the last quarterly conference for the year, or otherwise, to elect one lay delegate (who by virtue of his election shall be a member of the annual conference)—with the right to vote on every question, except on passing on the character or the trial of preachers—for every effective minister in full connexion, whom such circuit or station supports.

“*Secondly.* That the delegates thus elected join their clerical brethren in an election, at such time and in such manner as the Discipline may prescribe, in electing delegates, clerical and lay, in equal numbers, to the General Conference; the expenses of all the delegates, clerical as well as lay, to be paid as such expenses are now paid.”

It has been objected to this “plan,” that it does not meet the demand of a delegation from the lay members of the Church; being taken from the quarterly-meeting conferences, the members of which bodies are not elected by the laity. But it must be remembered that the convention did not propose to base their plan on the abstract right of the lay members of the Church to representation, either in the annual conferences or in the General Conference, but only on the ground that a lay delegation would be useful in the councils of the Church; and it was indifferent how the delegation was procured, so that pious, competent laymen composed it; and they avoided one of the most dangerous consequences to be apprehended from the proposed experiment, by avoiding popular elections in the Church. And we have no hesitation in saying, that they have proposed the only plan of selecting the delegates, which can even *be tried* as an experiment, without destroying, by electioneering strife and conflict, the peace and harmony of the Church, and finally sundering the only ligament by which religious fellowship can be maintained,—namely, brotherly-kindness and charity.

If, for instance, they had carried the elections into the classes, requiring each class to elect annually one lay member, and the persons so elected to constitute an electoral college, from which a delegation should go up to the annual conferences, how fearful the agitations which would grow out of the arrangement! We need not pursue this subject farther now. It has been fully examined and illustrated in the “Appeal,” with which this

volume opens, and to which we refer the reader. The convention have been guided by a sound discretion, and a practical knowledge of human nature, in their plan for procuring the delegates.

But after all the commendation to which we have thought the convention entitled, we think there are insuperable objections to their plan of innovation upon the ecclesiastical arrangements under which we have, hitherto, so efficiently fulfilled our calling as Methodists. In the first place, we cannot perceive the necessity or the utility of a lay delegation in the General Conference. The General Conference was instituted in 1784, and assembles every fourth year; and our little Book of Discipline contains the result of its deliberations for the space of more than sixty years, so far as the government of the Church is concerned. Now if we subtract from this little book all that no one desires to alter, and which the General Conference, even with the concurrence of the annual conferences, cannot constitutionally alter,—namely, our “Articles of Religion;” all which they cannot alter without the concurrence of three-fourths of the members of all the annual conferences, present and voting,—namely, the fixed ratio of representation; the rule which secures a “general itinerant superintendency;” the permanency of the “General Rules;” the privilege of our ministers and members in regard to trial by their peers, and right of appeal; and the appropriation of the “produce” of the Book Concern for the benefit of the necessitous ministers, their wives, widows, and children; and subtract also all that exclusively relates to the preachers and their itinerant work, their peculiar duties and services, together with the ordination and sacramental services, we shall find that what remains, and is applicable to the laity, will be reduced to one or two pages; and in this we think not one in a thousand is prepared to ask for any changes at all. Where, then, can be the necessity or the utility of so expensive and hazardous an alteration in our economy as is proposed by the convention?

The only condition of admission into the Church, is “a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from our sins;” and membership once obtained, cannot be forfeited but by some crime “clearly forbidden by the word of God,” and “sufficient,” in the judgment of the society of which the accused is a member, or a select number of them, “to exclude a person from the kingdom of grace and glory.” Surely a lay delegation of Christian men would not desire to make a rule less stringent than this; they would not desire to throw open the communion of the Church to persons living in the practice of crimes clearly forbidden in the word of God. What, then, could a lay delegation do for us in the General Conference to better secure the rights and privileges of the laity?

The fact is, that the great business, almost the exclusive business, of



the General Conference is, to consider and pass "rules and regulations" to secure the efficient execution of the itinerant plan of ministerial operation, which, from our origin, has been the distinguishing feature of Methodism; and these "rules and regulations" they who are wholly devoted to the work must be best qualified to make; and to them it ought to be left, without lay interference or control. If we turn to any Journal of General Conference proceedings, we shall find that all the standing committees are appointed with a view to the business of Conference above stated: they were, in 1848—the latest General Conference—committees on the episcopacy, the itinerancy, boundaries of annual conferences, the Book Concern, missions, and the state of the Church. In none of these, except the last two, could a lay delegation interfere with the least propriety; and we do not see what aid they could bring to the Conference, even in the consideration of missions and the state of the Church. The first, as well as the last, is essentially connected with the itinerancy. The information acted upon must be derived from itinerant ministers, and must relate to the work assigned to the ministry. The intimate connexion, therefore, of the General Conference, as now composed, with these subjects, must make them better acquainted with them than any lay delegates could be, and qualify them better to act upon all questions in relation to them. The necessity or the utility of a lay delegation to the General Conference, therefore, does not appear.

But if the "convention" had shown ever so great advantages to be expected from a lay delegation in the General Conference, they have failed to propose any practicable or feasible plan to provide for the expenses which would be necessarily incurred by it. They propose that the expenses of both the clerical and lay delegates be paid as they are now paid—that is, by the collections raised in the stations and circuits for this purpose, as far as they will go, and by drafts on the Book Concern for the balance. But we can hardly believe the laity would be willing to make the necessitous preachers—the superannuated, the worn-out preachers—their wives, widows, and children, pay for the lay advantages which are thought by the convention to be offered by this change in our economy; and such must be the case if the large deficit in the collections are to be made up by drafts on the Book Concern. The collections do not meet the expenses of the clerical delegates by a considerable sum, and they have no resource but to draw on their own Book Concern to make up the deficiency, however reluctant they may be to divert any portion of its "produce" from the beneficiaries for whom it was intended. But the expenses would be greatly augmented by a lay delegation, as laymen would feel very delicate about accepting the hospitalities accorded to travelling preachers, which have been so long practised among us, as to be identified with our itinerant system. And, besides, the clerical delegates

have no claim for anything but their expenses, as their allowance on their several stations and circuits is made without any deduction for the time occupied in attendance at the General Conference; but the lay delegates must be taken, for the most part, from men of business, farmers, mechanics, tradesmen, and merchants, whose time is money, and who could not afford to be away from home for six weeks or two months without some remuneration. It is no easier for rich men to get to heaven now, than during our Saviour's and his apostles' time; and hence now, as then, few such are called. And if we had them in sufficient numbers, it would not be safe, either for them or us, to become dependant upon them. The convention has given us this hint; and we cordially subscribe to its propriety. If we have lay delegates, they must be sought among those who are best qualified for usefulness in the relation they are intended to sustain, whatever be their worldly circumstances; and many, if not most of those, could not serve the Church as delegates to the General Conference at their own charges, without doing injustice to their families. Whoever takes an enlarged view of the matter, will perceive, that however frugal the allowance for lay-delegate services may be, that although the number of members in the General Conference is not increased by the plan of the convention, the amount of money required will be greatly augmented. The relief from private hospitality, both in getting to Conference and during its session, cannot be relied upon as now. Our brethren may not be free to accord it, and lay delegates would not be free to accept it. Yet expenses which must certainly be incurred, must be provided for by means as certainly operative; and it will never do to draw upon a fund provided for necessitous ministers, their wives, widows, and children, to pay the expenses of lay delegates. The only resource will be to grant new powers to the General Conference. It must be authorized to levy taxes, either a poll or property tax; and what would come of this, it is easy to foresee. How happy it is for our Church, that we are under no necessity to plunge into these difficulties! It would be Talleyrand's paradox over again. The thing would be, at the same time, *inevitable* and impracticable.

But let us look to the proposition for a lay delegation in the annual conferences. It is not proposed to enlarge the number of members to the General Conference by the addition of lay delegates; the number of clerical delegates is to be diminished by deducting one-half for the accommodation of the lay representatives; but in the annual conferences this cannot be done. All the elders, deacons, and preachers on trial, must be there; for the character of each and every one of them, personal and official, must be subjected to scrutiny before the conference. Now, add to the present members of any one of our annual conferences an equal number of laymen, and where can they assemble and find accommodation? There are few, if any, places within the boundaries of any annual

conference in which such accommodation could be found, and in most of them it would be impossible. The only alternative would be an encampment in the woods: and even this would require a large outlay for tents, provisions, &c.; and, in the nature of things, the laity would have to supply the "committee of ways and means," and "foot the bill." And, after all, the question occurs, *Cui bono*—for whose good—are all these difficulties and inconveniencies to be encountered? We can see no object or good purpose to be answered by it, except the election of delegates to the General Conference be such; and we have seen that such an election would not secure the services of the delegates: the difficulties multiplying at every successive step, until they become absolutely insuperable.

One remark more on the "plan" of the convention. It restricts the action of lay delegates in the annual conferences. They are not to participate in the proceedings in respect to the examination of character, or trial of preachers; but there is no limitation of action in the General Conference. We suppose, therefore, that the lay delegates are to participate in the action of the Conference, on appeals from the annual conferences by ministers who consider themselves aggrieved by the decisions of these bodies; and in the election of bishops, and the scrutiny always instituted by a standing committee into their moral and official conduct. But would this be fair on the part of the laity? Would it be fair to sit as judges in the case of ministers on trial, the result of which may be expulsion, while the laymen are secured, in such cases, by a trial and an appeal before laymen only? And would it be fair for laymen to participate in the election of a bishop, and in the review of the administration of bishops, whose power over the ministers—and which powers have been conferred by them for the good of the whole Methodist community—would it be fair and equal, we say, for the laity to participate in the appointment of bishops, whose powers are necessarily so nearly absolute over the traveling preachers, while they cannot lay a finger on a layman? Ought not the bishop to be chosen by those over whom he exercises his prerogatives; and ought he not to be responsible to them for the exercise of his powers of office? We think there can be, among men of reason and religion, but one answer to this question.

After all this will it startle our readers if we suggest a "plan," by which an enlarged co-operation of the laity, by their counsel and advice, may be essentially serviceable, and easily secured? Our financial concerns have, within the last twenty years, greatly multiplied; and we apprehend that the very duties of our ministers preclude them from generally acquiring the knowledge of financial matters, which is necessary in the management of the various enterprises of the Church, which require the collection and expenditure of money; such as the support of the ministry, missions, Sunday schools, colleges, academies, and other auxiliary insti-

tutions, for extending literature and religion. These, we think, make it important for the annual conferences to call upon the laity for a committee of ways and means to assemble with them at their annual sessions ; and, together with a committee of ministers appointed by the conference, to take under their consideration all matters of finance, and report the result of their deliberations to the conference for final action—the lay members of the committee to have the privilege of speaking and voting on all such subjects while under the consideration of the body.

We think such a committee could be very readily procured from the several boards of stewards within the bounds of the annual conferences. The stewards of each presiding-elder district might choose one or two of their members to act in this capacity ; or the quarterly conferences might delegate the power to select such a committee to an electoral college of lay members, elected by themselves severally—the college taking the committee for conference, either from their own body, the stewards of the conference district, or from the body of the laity at large, within the same bounds. The laymen thus chosen, together with the members of conference appointed to act with them, might be authorized to act through the year—corresponding, and meeting, or communicating by deputations on the interests with which they were charged, and personally aiding in the measures taken to raise funds, and in collecting the information in these respects for the government of the conference at the next session. But we need not go into the details of the plan. If the scheme is thought advisable, the particular provisions may be safely left with the several annual conferences who desire the aid proposed. We are not aware that any action of the General Conference is requisite to authorize such a measure by the annual conferences ; but of this the General Conference now at hand can judge. We have suggested the above measure as seeming to be in conformity with the advice of the apostles on an occasion somewhat similar, as recorded in the sixth chapter of "The Acts." We believe "it is not reason" now, any more than then, that ministers of the gospel "should leave the word of God and serve tables," or unnecessarily encumber themselves with financial affairs. Let us so relieve them of these burdens, that they may "give themselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word."

We find in the Nashville Christian Advocate, the details of a plan of lay co-operation in the Tennessee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, which we suppose to be the lay delegation referred to by one of the members of the "convention." We do not know whether the General Conference of the Church, South, took any previous action on the subject ; nor whether all the annual conferences have adopted the same plan. But we have been assured, that where this scheme of finan-

cial operation has been put in motion, it has worked well, admirably well, and without any increased friction of the itinerant machinery. We give the Tennessee provisions *in extenso* for the information of all concerned. Let all be done as in the presence of Him who purchased the Church with his own blood, and searcheth the hearts and trieth the reins of the children of men.

#### A FINANCIAL SYSTEM

For the Tennessee Annual Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church, South, adopted at Lebanon, December, 1851.

1. At each session of the annual conference there shall be a joint board of stewards, composed of laymen and travelling preachers.

2. There shall be one lay steward from each presiding elder's district, who shall be elected by ballot at the district stewards' meeting, when assembled for the purpose of estimating the claims of the presiding elder, who shall attend the annual conference, and shall have the right to speak and vote in the conference on all subjects relating to the finances of the Church.

There shall be an equal number of stewards elected by ballot from among the travelling preachers, who shall continue in office until the close of the ensuing annual conference, one of whom shall be chosen by the joint board of stewards as their chairman.

*I. It shall be the duty of this joint board of stewards,*

1. To receive the funds of the conference and divide the same among the necessitous claimants according to the *pro rata* amount of their several claims under the Discipline.

2. To estimate the probable amount that it will be necessary to raise, to meet the allowance to the bishops and all the claimants in the bounds of the conference for the ensuing year, and to apportion the same among the several districts in the bounds of the conference to the best of their ability.

3. They shall examine the reports of the several recording stewards of each circuit and station, and take such action thereon as may be deemed prudent, in order to improve our financial condition, and promote uniformity in the method and fidelity in the execution of the duty of stewards.

4. It will be expected of each member of the joint board of stewards, that they use their influence to promote the financial interest of the Church, and that the chairman of the board shall keep up a correspondence with the lay representative from each district, and shall, by written communications, or public addresses, do all he can to improve the finances of the Church.

5. The joint board of stewards shall report its proceedings to the

annual conference before the close of its session for its correction and adoption.

II. *The duties of the annual meetings of the district stewards in addition to that already laid down in the Discipline.*

1. To appoint or elect by ballot one of the stewards of the district, who shall represent the same at the ensuing annual conference as a member of the joint board of stewards, who shall hold his office for one year, or until the ensuing annual meeting of the district stewards; and that this representation may not fail, they shall also elect an alternate, and if by death or from any other cause a vacancy should occur, the presiding elder of the district shall appoint a steward to fill the vacancy until the ensuing annual district meeting.

2. The chairman of the district stewards' meeting shall immediately forward to the chairman of the joint board a certificate of the election of the representative, with his address, so that the chairman of the joint board may correspond with him (if need be) in order to promote the object of his appointment under this charter.

3. In addition to the estimated and disciplinary allowance to the presiding elder, they shall divide the amount assigned by the joint board of finance to the district, as conference collection, among the several circuits and stations of the district, which amounts, so divided, shall be reported to the meetings of the stewards in each circuit and station in the bounds of the district. The presiding elder shall also take a minute of these several appropriations.

4. This district stewards' meeting shall be held as soon as convenient after the close of the annual conference. This meeting shall consist of one steward from each circuit and station. The presiding elder shall fix upon the time and place for said meeting, and shall give each steward notice of the same.

III. *There shall be a meeting of the stewards of each circuit and station, as soon as convenient after the district stewards' meeting, the time and place to be appointed by the preacher in charge.*

1. To make a liberal and prudent appropriation for the family expenses of their preacher,—if a young man, for his board; if a married man, for the boarding of himself and family, if that should be thought best; but should he wish to keep house, in that case let them secure him a suitable house, with such furniture as may be necessary, fuel, table expenses, and, if need be, servants' hire, together with all other matters calculated to render the preacher's family comfortable,—so that the preacher may be enabled to give the whole of his time to the service of the Church. Let the amount necessary for the support of the preacher's family be added to his quarterage claim, as it is called, and the result shall be the official appropriation to the preacher.

2. They shall receive the report of their representative in the district stewards' meeting of the amount appropriated to be raised by them, both as it regards the claims of the presiding elder, and also the amount necessary to be raised as a conference collection,—the quarterage of the presiding elder, and his claim for family expenses, to be regarded as one common claim, and in like manner to be provided for.

3. They shall divide the several amounts among the several classes and congregations of the charge according to their numbers, and as far as they may be able to judge, according to their abilities and privileges.

4. They shall divide the classes or congregations of the charge into sections, assigning each section to a particular steward, whose duty it shall be to superintend the financial interest of the Church in the section assigned him.

5. The amount assessed for conference funds, called conference collections, shall be kept separate from other moneys, and shall be raised by public collections from the congregations, or by private donations.

6. The steward of each section shall see that these and all other public collections are faithfully made in due time, and repeated, if necessary; and should the conference collection fall short of the amount assessed in his section, he shall himself make, or cause to be made, a faithful effort to supply the deficiency by private contributions.

7. The stewards of each circuit and station may make a joint fund of all the moneys to be raised for the preacher or preachers of the charge, and presiding elder. The preacher or preachers of the circuit and stations shall settle with the recording stewards of the charge; and the presiding elder shall have his final settlement at the annual conference with the lay representative of his district, who shall be a member of the joint board of stewards; and should there be a surplus after paying the presiding elder, it shall be paid over to the lay representative of his district, to be placed by him in the hands of the joint board of stewards for distribution. These settlements shall always be made in writing, and shall be placed in the hands of the joint board of stewards for their examination and approval.

8. As soon as possible each steward shall inform the classes composing his section of the amount assigned to them, and the leader or class collector, as the case may be, shall ascertain of each member what he or she is willing to pay for the support of the gospel for the year, and record the same in a book kept for that purpose. The amount may be divided into four instalments, and paid quarterly. Let the stewards of each circuit and station use their best efforts to meet all the claims against them quarterly.

9. Each steward shall circulate, or cause to be circulated, within his bounds, where he may deem it expedient, a subscription-paper, in aid of

the same object, among those persons not members of our Church, but who attend upon our ministry. He is also authorized to raise public collections in the congregations for the same purpose.

10. At each quarterly meeting, the stewards, after settling with the preacher or preachers, and presiding elder, shall make a written exhibit to a meeting of the Church of the state of the finances, the amount received from each class and other sources, together with the deficiencies, if any, of each class, and give such advice and instruction as circumstances may require.

11. At each annual meeting of the stewards of the circuits and stations, the name of each steward shall be called, and strict inquiry be made into his fidelity and influence in carrying out our financial system; and if for any cause a member of their board should be found deficient, their chairman shall report his case to the ensuing quarterly meeting, by which he shall be removed from office, and the preacher in charge, after consultation with the stewards, shall nominate a brother to fill the vacancy.

12. The recording steward of each circuit and station shall keep a book, in which he shall keep a faithful record of every financial transaction connected with the business of the stewards under this charter. He shall also make a written report of the joint committee of finance of all the moneys received by his board, and how disposed of; of the settlements with the presiding elder and preacher or preachers of the charge; also the surplus moneys, if any be forwarded to them, together with the conference collections.

13. Each presiding elder shall cause to be spread upon the journal of the quarterly-meeting conference for each circuit and station within his district, and also upon each recording steward's book, a full copy of this financial plan, and shall read in the quarterly-meeting conference, at least once a year, in the several charges within his bounds, that part of this plan which refers to the duties of circuit stewards.

14. The recording stewards are requested to report to the joint board of finance in the following manner:—

15. Annual Report of the Recording Steward of ——— Circuit, for the ——— to the Joint Committee of Finance, of his settlement with the presiding elder and preacher or preachers of ——— Circuit, the moneys transmitted to the conference.





# CATALOGUE.

## I.

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